

Current Concerns

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English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

Agricultural policy must take into account global developments

by Gotthard Frick*



Gotthard Frick
(picture ma)

This is not a statement concerning the legislation on Swiss agriculture here. Today, our soil apparently can cover only 55% of our needs. However, this is an outline of worldwide medium and long-term developments that

should be taken into consideration in the Swiss agricultural policy. The data of the various international sources are slightly deviant. So we are talking about averaged orders of magnitude. Only a few specific examples can be given to the major issues. We will be starting with the conclusions.

Conclusions

The global development outlined below will lead to supply shortfalls, dependencies, tensions and conflicts and would have to be considered while making decisions about Switzerland's long-term agricultural policy.

Humanity continues to grow massively for years, mainly in less-developed countries. Competition for vital resources, including the agriculturally usable soil, is increasing. At the same time the area

available for food production decreases on a large scale. In addition, not only large corporations are buying up huge areas of fertile land, but in recent years many states (including India, China, Saudi Arabia) appeared as land buyers in other countries who fear that soon they will not be able to feed their population anymore. Countries needing to import food for their populations are thus increasingly dependent on these groups. Also, the food and raw materials being produced worldwide on soil owned by distant third-countries, will be probably only available for the peoples of those countries. Prices will rise. Large numbers of people move from rural areas, where they modestly could provide for their families as farmers, into mega-cities where they become completely dependent on sufficient food supply. Governments are increasingly ensuring that no shortage situations will arise, and if necessary, import food on large scale or reduce their exports. Fresh water – precondition for food production – is running out. Waste on land and in the rivers, lakes and seas becomes a problem and begins to threaten the local fish and other creatures – in addition to overfishing in many seas.

Population growth

Today 7.5 billion people inhabit the world. In 6 years there will be 500 million more children, from new-born up to five-year-old. In addition, 320 million kids come to the same age group, replacing the people who died in this period. Admittedly population growth decreases, but not as fast as predicted. So, in the six-year period after next, probably around 750 million children will be born. 300 million will replace people deceased during this period and about 450 additional millions, driving the population growth. This natural addition to the "world community" will need additional food, water, a wide range of products, housing, infrastructure, education, professions and energy.

Some more than 50 million people die each year. If you set this in reference

to the world's population of 7.5 billion, so that would be an average life span of 150 years. Since we will not get so old, how can that be explained? Because a large part of mankind is young. In addition, people in developed countries live so much longer today, they die later as the previous generations and other countries catch up in this regard. Some examples show this:

In Switzerland there are of 7.5 million inhabitants 15.6% in the group of young people up to the age of 14, and 16.3% are older than 64, belong to the group of the "old". The European Union has among its population of 509.3 million 15.4% young and 17.3% old people in the above defined ages.

However, of 85.3 million Egyptians are 31.4% in the group of young people and only 4.8% in the group of over 64, in Ethiopia of 93.9 million people 46.1% are in the group of the younger and only 2.7% in the group of the elder. In Bangladesh, of 163.6 million inhabitants 34.6% belong to the younger and 4% to the elder. For the 1.22 billion Indians, the ratio is 31.1% to 5.3%. Niger is the extreme case. Of its 17 million inhabitants, 49.6% are in the group of up to 14 and only 2.3% are over 64.

The fertility rate, i.e. the number of live births per woman, is revealing. A few examples:

Switzerland 1.5; Russia 1.6; China 1.6 (one-child policy); Afghanistan 5.5; Bangladesh 2.5; Burundi 6.0; Eritrea 4.2; Guinea 5.0; Congo Kinshasa 5.0; Mali 6.2; Mozambique 5.3; Nigeria 5.3; Pakistan 2.6; Philippines 2.6; Zambia 5.8; South Sudan 5.5; Uganda 6.0; UAE 2.4; Niger, one of the poorest countries, is also here in the first place, with about 7 children per woman (source: [www.welt-auf-einen-blick.de/...](http://www.welt-auf-einen-blick.de/)).

The large proportion of the 1–14 and the small proportion of the over 64 in many developing and emerging markets ensures that population growth will continue much longer. The young will have several children and the elderly live longer. In addition,

* Gotthard Frick studied *Civilisation française, economics and business administration* at the University of Paris (Sorbonne and Sciences Po). For many years he was involved in major infrastructure projects (power plants, power lines, roads, tunnels, irrigation systems) in Switzerland and overseas. From 1968 to 2004, he dedicated himself to establishing and chairing a consulting, management and training company with an affiliated English-language college, which works for all development banks, UN organisations (ILO, WTO, UNDP), OECD, Swiss and more other governments and companies. Today he often stays in China. He was an infantry battalion commander in the Swiss Army. Thanks to his visits to foreign armies (Germany, Pakistan), NATO and the US Air Force bases in Germany and Panama, he has a broad background in military science. Gotthard Frick is a member of the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland.

World Agriculture Report as the basis for a national agricultural policy

rt. The global political change of course in energy, climate and transport policies in recent years shows that it is possible in just a few months to re-set political coordinates, draw up implementation plans and for getting huge investments off the road for achieving a new aim. Prerequisite for this is a political will.

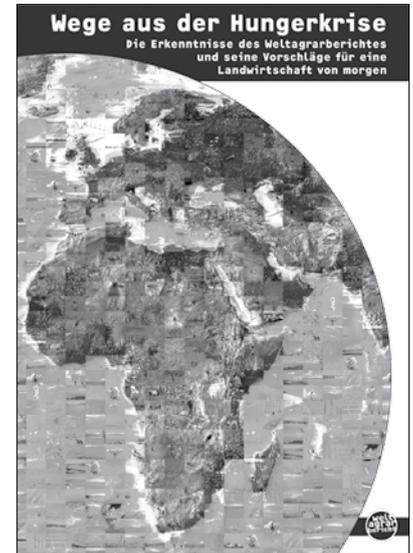
The compilation of *Gotthard Frick* is helpful in classifying the problems of Swiss agriculture into the global context. How will the world develop and what consequences will this have for our agriculture? The current agricultural policy does not give the impression that it is designed for the long-term needs of the population. It is even said that it only serves to save taxpayers' money and to hold out in negotiations with the EU, the WTO or TTIP as a bargaining chip for any concessions in other economic sectors (finance, pharmaceuticals, etc.).

In 2008, the *World Agricultural Report (International Assessment of Agricultural*

Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development IAASTD) caused a great deal of media attention. This report, written by more than 400 authors from 86 countries on a broad scientific basis within the *UN* and the *World Bank*, states that it is possible to feed the world's population through mainly regional, small-scale and family farming, without continuing to cause harm to the environment (<http://www.weltagrabericht.de/>).

The authors of the report make clear that it is a mistake to believe that the problems of global food security and unemployment can only be solved through industrialized agriculture. Especially the Third World countries are suffering from the consequences of the "First World's" globalized and industrialized agriculture. Also for the population in the so-called First World, the dependence on foreign, partly overseas, industrially and genetically modified food is no longer an option. Food sovereignty must once again become

a worthwhile aim of agricultural policy of the states. A political course correction is still pending. The World Agriculture Report shows feasible options for doing so. •



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President Erdogan just asked the Turks to have 5 children, in order to promote the advance of Islam in Europe.

Mega urbanisation

The cities are getting bigger and bigger. China has nearly 200 cities with more than 1 million up to several million inhabitants, so Chongqing has 33 million. Tokyo is the most populous city in the world with 36 million. In mega cities around the world entire districts are in the hands of criminal gangs and drug cartels. In the large slums of mega cities extremely poor people are living. In a few decades more than 10 billion people will live in mega cities, so supplying them will be a major task. China actively promotes the relocation of farmers into the cities and imports today already large quantities of food. In 2012, allegedly it had imported 2.3 million tons of rice from Pakistan, Thailand, and Vietnam, four times as much as in 2011.

Loss and purchases of agricultural soils, loss of forests

On the other hand, 100,000 square kilometres of agricultural soils are lost annually by overbuilding, poisoning, exhaustion, erosion and desertification. So, China has lost 200,000 square kilometres of agricultural land in the first 30 years since the reforms of 1978 and the transformation into an economic power.

It needs 1.12 million square kilometres to feed its current population – but this population grows as well – and has only 1.2 million square kilometres. From 2005 to 2013, 100,000 soil samples were tested there on 6.3 million square kilometres. 20% of agricultural soils proved to be contaminated, mostly by heavy metals, sometimes far beyond a more tolerable limit. As one reads in the Chinese press again and again that huge amounts of poisoned grain had to be destroyed (for example 12 million tons in 2012).

According to the *NZZ-Magazine Folio No 11* of 2012 (monthly supplement to the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung"), agricultural areas as large as the area of Western Europe, were already at that time in the hands of large groups. Increasingly, corporations from non-western states have joined up with buyers or long-term tenants. For some years now, however, countries such as China, the Gulf States, India, Japan, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, South Korea and others have been buying or leasing good agricultural land in an aggressive manner, out of concern that they will soon not be able to feed their population anymore. Even before the overthrow of 2014 in Ukraine, three large US corporations gained possession of 20,000 square kilometres of the world's most fertile soils, of which a total of 320,000 are available for purchase, and also took over seed companies, grain warehouses and parts of the grain handling port. Since then, China and other countries have been active there as buyers. According to *Swis-*

said, a Brazilian-Japanese company produces in Mozambique on 90,000 square kilometres rice and maize for export and a Lebanese group in Romania on 65,000 hectares food and meat for export to, among others, the Middle East. More than half of the agriculturally usable land of the Philippines is said to be already in foreign hands and 70% of the land in Germany is no longer owned by the farmers who cultivate it. According to the British *OXFAM*, from the beginning of this century until 2015, an additional 200 million hectares are said to have been bought or leased, in addition to agricultural land already in foreign hands. (By comparison, the EU has 185 million hectares of arable land.) Whilst Africa, South America and Asia were the main targets of the global land buyers, today land is purchased also in large-scale operations in Europe.

In Madagascar, there was a governmental crisis after it became public that an area the size of Belgium should be sold. In order not to attract too much attention due to the sheer size of the areas, China is said to have started to buy individual farms, for example in Zimbabwe, before it used to acquire huge areas just like the other buyers.

The corporations build very large, efficiently managed plantations that produce food primarily for the rich countries, but often crop products for fuel production or animal food for our luxury meat consumption or rubber or other raw

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materials for the industry. However, the countries buying large-scale quantities of land around the world will in future primarily supply their mega-cities with the products they produce instead of exporting them to third countries. Millions of farming families are losing their livelihoods and are migrating into the mega-cities with their slums.

Every year, around 90,000 square kilometres of land are deforested. In addition, the author saw on a trip to Canada huge areas of dead forests. According to local foresters, the pests did not perish because of the warm winter and have infested many millions of pines and firs. Even green-looking large forests are already doomed to die back. The area gone dead is reported to be the equivalent to that of Sweden. In addition, there are tens of thousands of square kilometres of dead forests in the USA.

Fresh water is scarce

Worldwide, drinking water and fresh water are scarce. Without water, there is no food production. Experts believe that water will become the most common cause of war in this century. Today there are serious tensions here and there because of water.

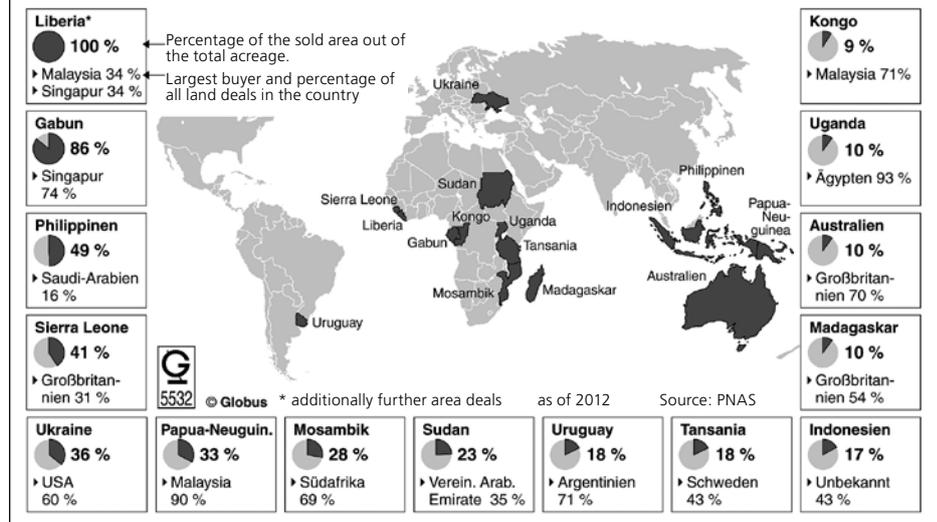
There are many reasons for the increasing water shortage: Absence of rainfall due to climate change, overexploitation, exhaustion, pollution and poisoning, diversions and for downstream users disrupting overexploitation of rivers and streams by those living upstream.

Lake Chad, the size of 25,000 square kilometres a few decades ago, has meanwhile shrunk to around 1,500 square kilometres, depending on the extent of the rainfall. The lake is essential for the populations survival of the four riparian states Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon.

Due to the shifting of the shore, Niger and Nigeria have no direct access to the water of the lake any more. The decline was caused by the deforestation of the local forests and the subsequent absence of rain and overuse of water for irrigation. The decline in food production has caused latent famine there. 2.7 million people were forced to go to refugee camps. They are hoping for a possibility to migrate to Europe soon. A Chinese corporation is currently investigating whether the lake could recover by diverting the Ubangi, a major tributary of the Congo. But even if the already once-rejected gigantic project materializes, it would take years for the water to flow into the lake. What the diversion of a river, which is five times larger than the Rhine near Basel, means for the affected

Agricultural land in foreign hands

Since 2008, around 50 million hectares of arable land have been sold globally to foreign investors. These 15 countries are most affected by so-called "land grabbing", 65 per cent of the globally bought up acreage is allotted to them.



Currently 41 countries possess foreign arable land to secure their food and energy supply in the long term. (Graphics: Fred Bökelmann; keystone)

drainage area (19 times the area of Switzerland), is another story.

In certain places there are large amounts of fossil groundwater beneath arid areas. It was stored in the ground when there was a different climate thousands of years ago. But it does not regenerate. It is used in many places for water supply. A few decades ago, Saudi Arabia began building huge farms irrigated with groundwater in the middle of the desert and to produce milk there, for example, with up to 50,000 Dutch high-performance dairy cows. However, due to this intensive use, the groundwater level has dropped by many hundreds of meters. The government has now ordered to give up these farms so that the groundwater remains available to humans for a little longer.

Libya is also an extremely dry desert country. But 3,800 kilometres in the south, in the Sahara, there are nearly 40,000 cubic kilometres of clean groundwater. Gaddafi wanted to solve the water problem for the next 100 years and started a gigantic project under the slogan "water instead of weapons". The plan was to bring the water to the coastal region by means of 5 pipelines with a diameter of 4 meter. For this purpose, a tube factory was built. Libya became the world leader in this field. 3 of the 5 planned pipelines were already in operation, and the inhabited Mediterranean coast was supplied with sufficient drinking and service water. But in the view of the West, as it so often happens in countries that do not want to bow to western ideas, Gaddafi had to be bombed away. The major western air raids destroyed 2 of the 3 pipelines and the tube factory and suddenly shut off half of the population's water supply. The UN and World Bank are said to consider privatizing the project. The water reserves in the

desert are still there and could help to improve the profits of corporations.

Decades ago, many rivers and lakes in Switzerland were so polluted that people could no longer go for a swim there. The nationwide construction of wastewater treatment plants has solved the problem. Many countries are in an even worse position because their waters are much more polluted than our waters ever were. In China, many rivers, even those that flow through big cities, but also lakes smell like dung water. In many countries, the polluted rivers contribute to the contamination of agricultural soils.

China is said to have had more than 50,000 rivers in 1990, with a drainage area of at least 100 square kilometres. In 2011, there were less than 23,000.

Countries in the lower reaches of streams, relying on their water for their people and for food production, are in dire straits when neighbouring countries are damming up the water upstream for their own use, consume it for their people, irrigate their land and build factories relying on water, thereby polluting the rivers with their wastewater. Egypt depends on Sudan and Ethiopia, Iraq on Syria and Turkey, Syria on Turkey, Bangladesh on India, Brazil on Peru, and so on. But Switzerland, too, with its natural water reserves of Europe, lies at the headwaters of the rivers flowing into its neighbouring countries. If the glaciers melt away, the water does not flow so abundantly, the countries located downstream could also come up with demand.

Drinking water is also becoming scarce. Big corporations buy up the springs and bottle the water. At present, 200 billion litres are bottled annually, which is already

US boosts Special Operations Forces Presence at Russia's Border

by Peter Korzun

The deployment of US Special Operations Forces in Europe is never in spotlight but it is rapidly increasing. There can be no other purpose than acquisition of capability to deliver strikes deep into Russia's territory.

The Trump administration is relying heavily on *Special Operations Forces (SOF)*. They are deployed to 137 countries or 70% of them in the world. At least 8,000 of SOF are operating in around 80 countries at any given moment. The numbers have ballooned from a few thousands in the 1980s to 70,000 at present. In 2016, the US deployed special operators to Taiwan, Mongolia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, India, Laos, the Philippines, South Korea, and Japan. In 2006, 3 per cent of special operators deployed

overseas were in Europe. In 2016, the number topped 12 percent.

Much has been said recently about SOF operations in Africa, which are going to expand and intensify. Formally, they are on train and assist missions to counter terrorist threats. But one can hardly imagine the need to deploy such special purpose forces from overseas to fight terrorists in the Old Continent.

The United States increased the presence of SOF in Europe four times last year. The forces are mainly deployed near Russia's borders, including such countries as the Baltic States, Romania, Poland, Ukraine and Georgia. In 2017, SOF have deployed to more than 20 European countries.

In March, SOF (*Army Green Berets*) trained along local troops in Lapland,

Finland, during exercise *Northern Griffin* 2017. In May, *Navy SEALs* were part of exercise *Flaming Sword 17* in Lithuania. In June, members of the US 10th *Special Forces Group* trained near Lubliniec, Poland. In July, naval SOF took part in *Sea Breeze* annual military exercise in Ukraine. In August, special-tactics combat controllers from the 321st *Special Tactics Squadron* surveyed the two-lane highway, deconflicted airspace and exercised command and control on the ground and in the air to land A-10s from the *Maryland Air National Guard's* 104th *Fighter Squadron* on the Jägala-Käravete Highway, Estonia. Also in August, SOF took part in Exercise *Noble Partner* in Georgia.

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around 27 litres per person. The inhabitants of poor areas suffer hardship because the bottled water is too expensive for them and the sources are sucked up by the corporations.

Littering

What do we see when we step into one of our glittering supermarkets? We look at a garbage pile. The garbage glitters brightly in all colours and consists of a variety of materials. But what we see, we do not want to buy, but only what is packed inside the garbage on the shelves. Recently, even single pieces of vegetables and fruits are wrapped in plastic and cellophane.

In Switzerland, the waste is still fairly well managed and recycled, like a part of the 500 million milk bottles per year. Dangerous garbage is exported out of Europe, USA and Australia. Among other things, electronic equipment is shipped to Accra, the capital of Ghana, where 100 containers arrive each month. There is now one of the largest electronic waste piles in the world. But other emerging and developing countries are also supplied with electronic, contaminated or toxic waste. The poor there, often children, then try to extract the valuable raw materials from deposed devices on these garbage dumps, to sell it to traders, who deliver it back to the developed countries, where it is used in the latest smartphones or tablet computers. The people who sift through the electronic garbage suffer from serious health damage.

On islands with luxury resorts, for example on the Maldives, the garbage is collected and dumped on a reserved, already very packed island. The beaches in front of many hotels in the tourist destinations are cleaned regularly, so that tourists believe the world is still tidy. Everywhere in the world, where the garbage is collected, for example, on Greek islands, large mountains of garbage arise. Not long ago we could read that in the south of China on a high hill of garbage, a landslide took place, destroying several houses and causing fatalities. The garbage mountains, even if they are finally covered with earth and look like natural hills, pollute the water and the soil. In the less developed countries, the garbage is thrown away, perhaps always on the same heap, in rivers, lakes and the sea. In the past, when everything was made of plant, animal and other natural materials, that caused no problem. But today the winds are blowing plastic garbage, paper, PET bottles, cardboard boxes, fabrics and more over the fields. One has to see the farmers' fields near big cities in Africa to understand what is going on there.

Overfishing and marine pollution

Since humans exist, they get food from the sea. It is already well-known that the Mediterranean has been fished empty, in part by state-of-the-art equipped fishing fleets from Asia. Now they are at work off the coast of West Africa where the coastal villages are very dependent on fishing. In other parts of the sea, riparians are trying to prevent the eradication of fish with quotas, restrictions on

approved equipment and methods and other measures.

The garbage, including plastic, becomes an additional big problem. Everybody has heard of the hundreds of thousands of square kilometres of plastic patches in the Pacific. But all the seas are affected. More and more fish and seabirds eat the plastic debris and die from it. But the plastic continues to decompose. The tiny particles are eaten by the plankton creatures – the very first link of the food chain – and perish. The larger species that live on the plankton have no more food and are also drowning; and so the dying continues through the food chain in the sea.

In many coastal countries the garbage is dumped into the sea. Anyone who used to travel by ferry in the Mediterranean has already witnessed this kind of "disposal". The large plastic bags in the waste containers on the ships were tied together an hour before arrival at the port of destination and then dumped over the stern into the sea. Like pearls of a chain, the sacks lay in the wake swimming in the water and then slowly began, after bursting, to sink surrounded by a swarm of screeching gulls. Also, many coastal sites dump their trash over steep cliffs. Although there are here and there environmentally friendly methods to dispose the garbage, the bottom of the Mediterranean and probably other seas is covered in some places by high piles of waste. But that is what happens in all the seas. The lonely beaches of beautiful uninhabited islands are littered with garbage washed ashore.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Will the war against Russia be prepared?

by Karl Müller

On 13 November 2017, the “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” reproduced one of *Donald Trump’s* Twitter messages in indirect speech. On 12 November, the US President had written: “When will all the haters and fools out there realize that having a good relationship with Russia is a good thing, not a bad thing. The[y]’re always playing politics – bad for our country. I want to solve North Korea, Syria, Ukraine, terrorism, and Russia can greatly help!” Indeed, the US American and the Russian Presidents met during the APEC summit in Vietnam, agreeing on important further steps towards an end of the war in Syria (see box below). Does this mean everything is heading in the right direction?

What is the direction of US politics?

There are processes pointing in a different direction. And above all the crucial question: How honest and how sustainable are such Twitter messages of the current US President and will he be able to implement such positions in future American-Russian relationships? Against numerous warmongers in both parties and in the media? Against the military-industrial complex? Against the forces of deep state who are backing war? Against those banks, hedge funds etc. which – as it has happened regrettably frequent in history – are benefitting from conflicts and wars?

One almost gets the impression that US policy keeps all options on the table. This includes preparation for war – which is not to be discussed openly, however, at least not in Europe. Thus German speak-

ing media have withheld the fact that the US are substantially increasing the number of their Special Operation Forces. German speaking readers only could learn about this on 8 November at *RT Deutsch*. The internet page had referred the text of a US American web page (see above) of 3 November. According to this report, more and more US specialized troops are deployed in states along the Russian border. In 2017, they have already participated in numerous exercises. Their mission invariably was to fight “against the enemy in the east”.

Sole purpose: Military strikes deeply into Russia ...

Official sources claim that the sole purpose of the increased number of troops was to protect Eastern European countries against a “Russian aggression”. The comment of *RT Deutsch*, however, is thought-provoking: “[...] if really defence was the main purpose, then the Baltic States would need a classical array of defence systems protecting their borders. But this is not what Special Operation Forces can do. The Special Forces deployed in Europe are almost exclusively offensive command units like for example the Navy Seals, US Marines or Green Berets.” The US analyst himself writes, in the second sentence of his article: “The purpose can only be to obtain the ability to execute strikes deeply into Russian territory.”

...because Russia is interfering

RT Deutsch has good connections to Russia and many will say: So this is the lat-

est Russian propaganda (“fake news”). But everyone can check the facts. Maybe even more a check with history books helps. There is no need to study *Halford Mackinder* and his Heartland Theory in order to realise that the western “Enemy Stereotype Russia” (this is the title of a book by the Austrian author *Hannes Hofbauer* worth reading) has neither started nor ended with Soviet Communism. A large, independent and united Russia rich in natural resources is interfering the still not abandoned world power plans of the Anglo-Saxon war party and its allies. Even if these allies are treated like vassals. But they still seem to be willing, if needed, to sacrifice their peoples and states senselessly.

It does not help to look away

So the bottom line is: In spite of all the President’s Twitter messages, the current US administration is also permitting preparations for a war against Russia, step by step and well in advance and not just since 2014. This war is to be led also with soldiers, with bombs and missiles – in case attempts fail to bring Russia to its knees or to destroy it from within. We should not delude ourselves: also a “modern” war against Russia would mean millions of victims. It does not help to turn a blind eye to this. Only small children think that they can hide by covering their eyes. Nobody knows what will happen. But it cannot be wrong to publish and to denounce all facts of war preparations while taking such twitter messages by the US President at face value and to state: “War is obsolete!”

“US boosts Special Operations ...”

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According to Major *Michael Weisman*, a spokesman for *US Special Operations Command* Europe, “Outside of Russia and Belarus we train with virtually every country in Europe either bilaterally or through various multinational events.”

In April-May, 2017, Naval Special Warfare operators from *US Special Operations Command* along with NATO special operations forces from Albania, Bulgaria and Lithuania took part in exercise *Saber Junction 17* at the *Joint Multinational Readiness Centre* in Germany. Ukraine and Georgia were among participating countries. In addition to the integration of US SOF, a simulated resistance force was introduced into the exercise through the use of the Lithuanian National Volunteer Defence Force.

American commandos have deployed quietly to the Baltic States. Dozens of United States Special Operations forces have a “persistent” presence there to train special operators.

This year, a United States *National Guard Special Forces group* based in Birmingham, Alabama, was tasked with learning the Russian language, including military terminology, as well as history, culture and traditions in what appears to be a preliminary phase of a potential overseas operation. This is the start of a five-year program to prepare National Guard SOF. The language course is expected to last from three to six weeks. It includes military terminology and the practical application of command terms. In addition, instructors are supposed to provide an overview of regional cultural awareness, including important dates and personali-

The SOF are deployed in the proximity of Russia’s borders under the pretext of defending the allies scared of potential “Russian aggression”. If they were, they would ask for general purpose forces, such as Army units, equipped with defensive weapon systems to protect their borders. They would not need SOF, which are offensive strike units just like US Marines in Norway. Instructors specializing in defensive operations, not SOF, are needed to prepare forces for repelling adversary’s attacks. What SOF and Marines can teach is the art of carrying out first strikes. Their deployment in Europe is never in spotlight but it is rapidly increasing. There can be no other purpose than acquisition of capability to deliver strikes deep into Russia’s territory.

Source: www.strategic-culture.org/news/2017/11/03/us-boosts-special-operations-forces-presence-at-russia-border.html

Ongoing need to reduce human suffering in Syria

Statement by the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States of America
on 11 November 2017 in Danang (Vietnam)

President *Trump* and President *Putin* today, meeting on the margins of the APEC conference in Danang, Vietnam, confirmed their determination to defeat ISIS in Syria. They expressed their satisfaction with successful US-Russia enhanced de-confliction efforts between US and Russian military professionals that have dramatically accelerated ISIS's losses on the battlefield in recent months. The Presidents agreed to maintain open military channels of communication between military professionals to help ensure the safety of both US and Russian forces and de-confliction of partnered forces engaged in the fight against ISIS. They confirmed these efforts will be continued until the final defeat of ISIS is achieved.

The Presidents agreed that there is no military solution to the conflict in Syria. They confirmed that the ultimate political solution to the conflict must be forged through the Geneva process pursuant to UNSCR 2254. They also took note of President *Assad's* recent commitment to the Geneva process and con-

stitutional reform and elections as called for under UNSCR 2254. The two Presidents affirmed that these steps must include full implementation of UNSCR 2254, including constitutional reform and free and fair elections under UN supervision, held to the highest international standards of transparency, with all Syrians, including members of the diaspora, eligible to participate. The Presidents affirmed their commitment to Syria's sovereignty, unity, independence, territorial integrity, and non-sectarian character, as defined in UNSCR 2254, and urged all Syrian parties to participate actively in the Geneva political process and to support efforts to ensure its success.

Finally President Trump and President Putin confirmed the importance of de-escalation areas as an interim step to reduce violence in Syria, enforce ceasefire agreements, facilitate unhindered humanitarian access, and set the conditions for the ultimate political solution to the conflict. They reviewed progress on the ceasefire in southwest Syria that was finalized the last time the two Presi-

dents met in Hamburg, Germany on July 7, 2017. The two presidents, today, welcomed the Memorandum of Principles concluded in Amman, Jordan, on November 8, 2017, between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Russian Federation, and the United States of America. This Memorandum reinforces the success of the ceasefire initiative, to include the reduction, and ultimate elimination of foreign forces and foreign fighters from the area to ensure a more sustainable peace. Monitoring this ceasefire arrangement will continue to take place through the Amman Monitoring Center, with participation by expert teams from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Russian Federation, and the United States.

The two Presidents discussed the ongoing need to reduce human suffering in Syria and called on all UN member states to increase their contributions to address these humanitarian needs over the coming months.

Vietnam, Danang, November 10, 2017

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“One should take distance from the general public opinion”

When EU and NATO say “fake” they mean the elimination of our fundamental rights

by Willy Wimmer, former State Secretary of the Federal Minister of Defense.



Willy Wimmer
(picture uk)

It's happening again: It is dangerous to have your own opinion. If your opinion deviates from the government guidelines, the EU regulations or the World Declaration Guidelines from Washington regarding NATO, then your opinion

is attacked. Subsequently you lose the right to speak in the German Bundestag.¹ Due to this “deviationism” you are urged to leave the German Bundestag. No wonder that the plenum of the German Bundestag is adopting more and more manifestations from the Kroll Opera² or the People's Parliament of unblessed memory. In Berlin, the Senate prohibits public events that uphold the diversity of opinions.³

The fundamental right of the citizen to freely form opinions as according to our Basic Law no longer occurs. The so-called leading media does not reflect the differing views of the German population. Subsequently the government does not have to deal with the various views in the country. The government in the style of a NATO Popular Front can do whatever it wants. In this way it can sanction deviant opinion in a totalitarian way. In this way, the Ministry of Justice has developed a “device for outsourcing censorship and immunity of NATO fakes”.⁴

According to the Basic Law, the sole political justification for the existence of political parties lies in popular opinion building and decision making of the German people. How this is degenerated, you can see every day. Within the parties the diversity of opinions no longer exist and are tailored to the leadership in Berlin. Undesirable opinions that threaten the Berlin person-power-cartel can be reported immediately. The party does not want to align with the public view, because that counteracts the given line. The immediate end of the political career is guaranteed. Opportunism is party line and now includes – with exceptions – the old parties represented in the Bundestag. If you don't join in the general NATO war strategy you are blocked to be part of the government.

One may show off in attacking the current American President *Trump*, who has forbidden direct communication with his

Russian counterpart *Putin*. Why? Because communication in matters threatens. These matters jeopardize the very existence of all mankind, at least of Central Europe, if they should be martially decided.

Actually, where were the Chancellor and the Federal President and those who by consensus today, show the new American President *Trump* the cold shoulder, when the predecessor presidents exclusively and alone had plunged the world into today's misery? Including the coup in the Ukraine, which one probably has to answer for in order to justify the military deployment against the Russian Federation somehow. Since 1992 violation of promise and treaty has been Western policy, and in 1999 Belgrade was the first victim.

What is at stake this week, the British Prime Minister tried to make clear during a security speech in the style of an “island fury”. If you annually finance the BBC with hundreds of millions of pounds as an instrument of British foreign policy to have an instrument of global opinion dominance, then competition is unwanted. People are supposed to fall for the BBC and CNN hype, because the journalistic-ly excellent program like the Russian RT is of greatest evil. Especially because RT in Europe and in the US allows opinions which do not follow the EU and NATO warpaths. Mrs *Theresa May* made it clear in her speech. It is about the superiority of the “Anglo-Saxon race” in the sense of *Cecil Rhodes*, which embodies itself today in the “new world order”. If a politician or a country goes against this line it must be eliminated, even if it is only in the form of RT or Sputnik. Ms May and others say “fake” and mean the removal of our fundamental rights.

Editor's comments:

¹ In all parliamentary groups, the party leadership decides who gets the right to speak in the parliamentary debates. Members of the Bundestag who do not join the majority opinion in their group are not given the right to speak. This is what happened to *Willy Wimmer* among others after his criticism of German participation in the NATO war – being against international law – against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999. Although he was a proven defense and foreign politician, he was no longer allocated time to speak by the CDU/CSU parliamentary group. Then the only way to get to speak in the Bundestag, are so-called personal explanations.

² The Berlin Kroll Opera was the venue of the Reichstag after the fire of the Reichstag building in February 1933. The place is synonymous

with a parliament that is disempowered, forced into line and subordinated to a dictatorial executive.

³ The Berlin Senator for Culture *Klaus Lederer* (Die Linke) intervened and prevented an award ceremony for the publicist *Ken Jebsen*. Ken Jebsen was to be presented on 14 December 2017 the “Charlemagne Prize for Committed Literature and Journalism”. The prize is awarded by the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung Online*. On short notice, the organizers of the award ceremony terminated the room and the award ceremony was cancelled.

⁴ At the initiative of the German Minister of Justice *Heiko Maas* (SPD), shortly before the end of the last parliamentary term at the end of June 2017, the German Parliament and the Federal Council passed a law threatening social networks with high penalties if they publish so-called “hate speeches”. This is just one of the planned government measures against so-called “fake news”, “Russian propaganda” etc. Critics assume that the networks for fear of possible punishment delete or no longer allow not only actual violations of law, but also political criticism, for example, to the EU and NATO.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

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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

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The US is driving further wedges between Russia and Europe

by Prof. Eberhard Hamer



Prof. Eberhard Hamer (picture zvg)

A week ago, the US Department of State submitted a new sanction list against Russia, thus meeting a requirement signed on 2 August under the name of CAATS (*Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act*) by

President *Trump*. This regulation will come into force on 29 January 2018. It is a new attack in the economic war against Russia, which affects not only Russian companies, but also, and most notably, European firms which do business with sanctioned Russian companies.

This new intensified economic war is in line with *Trump's* "America First" policy. The sanctions against the Russian and German companies participating in the *North Stream pipeline*, for example, are avowedly explained by the desire to cut Europe off from Russian gas, so that Europe will have to buy the more expensive American LPG, which is currently abundant and not otherwise marketable. Accordingly, the *North Stream* line is to be discontinued after half of the way, in that the German companies involved are also threatened with sanctions to keep them from further involvement.

All US sanctions can be dealt with and punished arbitrarily in the United States because the American judiciary puts all business, all over the world, under American law, if it is invoiced in dollars or carried out with the help of the dollar. So American jurisdiction and dominion rules when ever the dollar is used, and therefore European companies can arbitrarily be sentenced and exploited according to US law. VW alone has already had to pay 25 billion euros to the American judiciary because of the US standard regulations specially introduced against the diesel engine, the German bank has paid more than 10 billion, and the other international corporations differing amounts.

The American CAATS Act stipulates that all sanctions must be coordinated with the US partners. It cannot be expressed more openly that these sanctions are to be prosecuted only in the case and to the extent that they harm American partners in competition, and that ul-

"This has a significant impact on Europe, where trade in the most promising future market (Russia) has fallen by 30 per cent in the last two years alone. And American trade with Russia has increased to the same extent as European trade with Russia has been reduced. So it is not just about damaging Russia but also about 'America First', which means excluding Europe from doing that business with Russia which American companies want and are able to do."

timately, it should lie within the competence of American companies to demand these sanctions.

With the aid of these sanctions, the US not only wants to systematically isolate Russia from Europe, to cut off Russian companies from all dealings with Europe and the world, but also to threaten (and penalise) the rest of the world, especially Europe, if they do business with Russian companies. This has a significant impact on Europe, where trade in the most promising future market (Russia) has fallen by 30 per cent in the last two years alone. And American trade with Russia has increased to the same extent as European trade with Russia has been reduced.

So it is not just about damaging Russia but also about "America First", which means excluding Europe from doing that business with Russia which American companies want and are able to do.

There can be no more brutal way of implementing America's economic imperialism to the detriment of Europe. It is not only the big companies who no longer dare to trade with Russia or to participate in Russian investments – even hundreds of medium-sized companies which have up to now successfully dealt with the Russia business, dare not continue these dealings because they would not survive the brutal US sanction payments.

In the US, a further intensification of the economic war against Russia is in preparation: European banks and even private individuals are to be prohibited from trading or holding Russian bonds in the future. So Russia is to be punished for not accepting the dollar as the only world currency, and for wanting to establish also the ruble as an international currency. And the European financial markets are to be prevented from

calculating in rubles instead of in dollars or from trading in ruble bonds altogether.

Such measures unilaterally damaging Europe would properly have to be discussed with the European allies, and at least the protest of the EU Commission and the German Federal Government would have to be expected ("this is not done among friends"). Nothing has happened. The EU is quietly bowing to the colonial power, even where it hurts.

The isolation of Russia from Europe is not only fatal for some of our economy in the short term, but for all of Europe's prosperity in the long term. The "America first" policy in favour of American companies is already making trade with the US increasingly difficult and it is rapidly declining. This is likely to entail dramatic effects when the over-indebted US' toxic dollar system collapses.

In the long term, Russia is not only more solvent, it also needs the European economy as a supplement in the future. The German economy will only continue to grow until 2050 if it continues to expand to the east. Russia has all the raw materials we need, and we have all the technologies Russia needs. For both of us, and for Europe, this cooperation is crucial for a prosperous century.¹ If we allow the US to shut us off from it, the competing American companies will then have conquered this market, and we will stay behind as the losers.

But who in Germany or Europe would dare to take a stand against American arbitrariness? •

¹ cf. Hamer, Eberhard. *Visionen 2050. Wohin steuern wir? Trends und Prognosen für Deutschland und Europa*. (Visions 2050. Where are we going? Trends and prognoses for Germany and Europe) Kopp Verlag 2016

With digitisation eliminating grown structures?

Focus on Swiss employment law

by Dr iur. Marianne Wüthrich

Digitisation of all areas of life is currently praised as an indispensable and inevitable vision of the future: From an early age, schoolchildren – contrary to warning voices of renowned educators – are bothered with tablets, the public services are to be offered more and more through vending machines or online, and in spite of grave security concerns and democratic objections e-voting is driven forward, whole municipalities are switching to electronic services. IT corporations are agitating strongly the boost for the beckoning billion-dollar business with the solvent Swiss state. In the meantime, the Federal Council is campaigning for a “Digital Switzerland Strategy” (cf. *Current Concerns* No 25 from 19 October 2017).

The focus is currently on Swiss labour law, an illustrative example of the transformation of “traditional forms of living and working together”¹, i.e. the integration of the working population into globalised structures and digitised large corporations. At this point, some important building sites in the labour law are to be outlined, which we must keep in mind in the near future.

On 4 October 2017, the *Avenir Suisse* think tank has published a study entitled “When robots roll up. Preparing the labour market for digitisation”. On 8 November, the Federal Council adopted the report “Effects of Digitisation on Employment and Working Conditions – Opportunities and Risks”. Some significant points will be discussed here.

“Preparing the labour market for digitisation”

In its report, the Federal Council examines the measures that will be necessary as a result of the restructuring of the labour market due to digitisation: “In this context, two subjects are in the focus: First, education should be oriented even more towards competences and knowledge required in the digital economy. Secondly, the Swiss labour market must continue to have the flexibility for the use of digital transformation. At the same time, the insurance against social risks must be guaranteed.”²

Coming up step by step in the near future is to specifically keep a close eye on the – so far only planned – measures. Today, we first deal with the labour law issues that have to be solved in the context of digitisation.

Objective of the more than 70-page study by *Avenir Suisse* is to “uphold and

The ploughing up of labour markets and isolation of people through Gig Economy

mw. “Digital platforms”, i.e. business relationships via the Internet in which the contracting parties do not know each other personally, are described online as follows: “Platform-based business models influence the way we book accommodation, establish relationships, pay, move and work. The latter is neither obvious nor thoroughly researched. Basically, these platforms only provide a contractor and a client. For this reason, *Uber*, for example, does not refer to itself as a transport service platform, but as a pure mediation platform. The platforms operate in multilateral markets and link peer to peer groups such as passengers with drivers or buyers with sellers. Typically, this results in an *Uber* driver using his private car and an *Airbnb* lessor using his own apartment to carry out a contract. It is special that the contractors are part of the Gig Economy, as they are paid for ‘gig-based’ by order.”

In the “Gig Economy”, people work temporarily and without contractual and insurance protection as so-called

“independent” or “self-employed” workers (“Freelancer”). According to the source mentioned above, 34% of the working population in the United States already works independently, and according to “*Deloitte Research*” (2016) some 25% of all persons of employable age in Switzerland partly perform temporary, additional or project-based work alongside full-time or part-time jobs.

However, the independence of freelancers (or clickworkers) is rather illusory, as they are usually poorly paid and irregularly and bear the risks of illness and accident themselves. The client, on the other hand, earns several times: He does not have to pay for office space, no further training and no social security premiums, and the payment for individual contracts or projects is naturally much cheaper than the wages for permanent employees.

Source: Cornaz, Catherine. “Gig Economy: Wie *Uber* & Co. die Arbeitswelt verändern”. 6.4.2017. <https://blog.hslu.ch/diginect/2017/04/06/gig-economy/>

further increase the flexibility of the relatively liberal Swiss labour market [...] in the “fourth industrial revolution” as well as “to reject interventionism and new regulations.”³ Primarily employees are expected to be more flexible: They should be willing to forego a part of the employee protection in the Swiss Labour Law, because only under the condition of “more flexible working models” digitisation would not destroy jobs but on the contrary would form “a prerequisite for the creation of new jobs” (study *Avenir Suisse*, p. 7).

Digitisation is therefore likely to lead to major upheavals in the labour market and to increased uncertainty for many employed persons. Who in the future wants a job – or more jobs! –, he and his family can live reasonably from, will have to wrap up warmly. That’s why we citizens, too, have to “keep an eye on the risks” and to join in the discussion in good time.

“Atypical work” will increase – employee protection is to be reduced

Even though today the overwhelming majority of working people in Switzerland still have full-time jobs and a majority of part-time workers have voluntarily chosen this form of work, already about 18 per cent of jobs are – with increasing tendency – “atypical”: fixed-term em-

ployment contracts, work on call without a minimum working hours guarantee, teleworking, multiple workers and false self-employed persons of the “Gig Economy” (see box). While *Avenir Suisse* on the one hand assuages that the fear of an increase in “precarious” (i.e. underpaid and poorly insured) forms of work was virtually unfounded, the authors explain a few pages later: “In the medium term, however, the importance of new forms of employment will certainly increase. A strong increase should even be understood as a positive signal for Switzerland.” Because in the first “World Digital Competitiveness Ranking (IMD, 2017)”, Switzerland is only in 8th place ... (*Avenir Suisse* study, pp. 30 and 34).

In this sense, the think tank as well as parliamentarians from bourgeois parties demand a reduction in employee protection in the “Federal Act on Labour in Industry, Commerce and Trade (‘Arbeitsgesetz’ ArG)”.

Envisaged reforms of labour law: working time, rest period, recording of working time should be regulated more flexibly

"With digitisation eliminating ..."

continued from page 9

First, a preliminary remark: The Swiss Code of Obligations OR regulates the private labour law. Apart from a number of compulsory regulations, for example on notice periods or continued pay in the case of illness, the drafting of the contract is left to the individual employers and employees or rather to Collective labour agreements (CLA) between the unions and the employers' organizations on many issues. In contrast, the Swiss Labour Law primarily includes mandatory worker protection norms, such as maximum working time, overtime rules, rest period, prohibition of night work (with clearly regulated exceptions) and much more.

Since today a large part of the employed persons in Switzerland works in the service sector and many – especially in the context of digitisation – are no longer bound exclusively to a workplace in the company, a number of recent initiatives by the National and the Council of States focus on working time and rest period:

- Working hours and rest periods: employees in executive positions and specialists shall be exempted from the rules on maximum working hours; the prescribed 11-hour rest period per day shall be relaxed for them (which is often already the case in today's practice);⁴
- Seasonal model: shall be possible for certain sectors by regulation of the Federal Council⁵
- Recording of working time: executives and specialists shall generally be exempted from the obligation to record working time;⁵ as well as employees in start-ups with employee participation during the first five years of operation.⁶
- Home office: For those working partially at home, the rules on maximum daily working hours and rest periods shall apply only to a limited extent.⁷

Protection of workers must be guaranteed

Changes of the labour law in a moderate framework certainly make sense to some extent. In principle, employees in management functions have to meet their specifications. Today it is already partly their own business when and where they do this. A mother, working partially on a computer at home in order to take care of her own children, must be able to organise her working hours and rest periods. However, it is important that employees' representatives are able to shape such new arrangements and to ensure that the purpose of working hours and rest periods, namely the protection of employees, is guaranteed. In the sense, for example, of the union Unia (the largest trade union in Switzerland): "A modern labour law protects the employ-

ees [...]. Instead of undermining the labour law piece by piece, protective measures are needed that are adapted to the new forms of work. Therefore home office, click-working [see box] and constant accessibility have to be regulated. Unia is committed to employee participation and active participation concerning their working hours and working conditions. It is committed to ensuring that employees can organise their working hours as far as possible in accordance with other areas of life within the statutory framework of working hours and rest periods."⁸

Employees or independent workers – the central question about coverage by social insurance

In Switzerland there is the question of greater concern of how much insurance coverage a worker has, if he is employed or if he has several job contracts or projects as a free-lancer. This is not the framework for a thorough description of these types of problems. However, it is to be documented that with the increase in jobs or contractual jobs through digital platforms, it is imperative to solve the problem of insurance coverage.

Avenir Suisse suggests the creation of a third category in addition to the independent and hired worker: "the *independent employee*". This status would be particularly suitable for short-term or irregular activities. As a think tank mostly for the large enterprises with headquarters in Switzerland, the Avenir Suisse emphasises the importance of a minimal amount of buro-cracy (for example with an online agreement instead of a written and signed

employment contract!) as well as „broad contractual liberties“: "Both parties, when determining the status of the independent worker, are free to define the limit of the least amount of regulations: amount of work, salary, expected performance and duration of the contract. The defining of a workload or the place of work can be omitted. Compensation for holidays and vacation or dismissal is not required." (Study Avenir Suisse, p. 58) – It's already clear which party would enjoy the „broad liberties“ of this model ...

The „independent employee“ would get "flat-rate insurance" (AHV, lowest rates in career provision, minimal continuation of salary payments in the case of illness or accident), however, no unemployment insurance. The rates would be halfway shared with the employer (Study Avenir Suisse, p 58f.) – How the employee must afford his insurance payments with his small salary through "short-term or irregular employment" is not revealed to us by the think tank ...

More human empathy for the digital worker is shown more naturally by the union, Unia: "More and more employees are becoming 'Crowd workers': isolated, apparent independent without social insurance. So that such extreme forms of exploitation as in the earlier times of capitalism are avoidable, the employee of the platform economy must be protected from arbitrary acts and his salary, his development possibilities and the balance of work and life, must be made secure. The social risks, such as illness, unemployment or age,

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Resistance against Uber car service in Zurich

mw. November 2014: *Uber Pop* starts in Zurich. Private drivers without a taxi licence start to take passengers with them at much cheaper prices ("Tages-Anzeiger").

August 2015: The *IG Airport Taxi drivers Zurich* complains about Uber drivers pushing themselves into the official taxi waiting area at the airport ("Schweiz am Sonntag").

December 2015: Spontaneous taxi-driver demonstration in central Zurich with a horn concert and traffic blockades. Occasion: Registered taxi drivers will be fined if they do not comply with legal work and rest periods, Uber drivers will not. *Taxisektion Zurich* demands prohibition or at least strict control of Uber Pop ("Blick").

December 2016: SRF reports more than 500 criminal proceedings against chauffeurs who are said to have carried passengers on a regular basis without an appropriate licence. The Zurich cantonal police catch 139 Uber drivers, the city police 79. Some drivers ask passengers to get in the front to simu-

late a private journey (SRF programme "10vor10").

June 2017: After several enquiries from the cantonal council, Zurich's State Council finally states that Uber-Pop drivers often act illegally without a permit for professional passenger transport. Although the drivers met the requirements of the Californian online company, they violated Swiss law ("Limmattaler Zeitung").

August 2017: Uber stops the controversial layman service in Zurich. Uber-Pop drivers have three months to get a taxi licence so that they can work under the *Uber X* label ("Blick").

Source: Watson from 10.8.17
<https://www.watson.ch/Schweiz/Wirtschaft/516657605-Das-Ende-von-Uber-Pop-in-Zürich--How-the-company-communicates-it---and-how-it-really-was>

The Californian leadership of the digital platform is obviously agile: it adapts to the legal situation in other countries and then continues to take profits unmolested ...

School in continuous descent? Enough is enough!

by Felice Pensatore

A short while ago, an article from a parenting magazine landed on my desk. Its title was “School of tomorrow”.¹ Starting from *Curriculum 21* with its planned lessons on information and communication technologies (ICT) and media, the writer sketches out the future school life of our children. Equipped with a tablet and accompanied by *learning coaches*, they are supposed to acquire their competences by way of *digital learning path management* and *digital learning tasks* in age- and performance-mixed groups in order to pass the desired standardised tests, which will in future take over the evaluation and selection for promotion in place of the teaching staff.

The writer points to the large companies waiting in the background and ready to offer *cloud solutions*, *social media*, *interactive websites* and *all kinds of apps and learning programmes*, *as well as video tutorials*, *modular learning materials*, *learning path tracking* and *international tests*, all this on a subscription basis, possibly including specialised teachers to cover the offer locally or in *remote coaching*. Corrections could largely be carried out automatically. Writing would become less important because texts could be dictated to the computer, and human-like robots could answer questions, cover emotional needs, sing or tell stories. This is a summarised extract of the article.

Just to clarify a much heard misunderstanding of parents and teachers of good faith – this is not about a school in which digital, or better said electronic, devices and media are used temporarily as didactic means to practice skills or to illustrate learning content according to the age of the learners, and alternating with other learning and teaching opportunities. Nor is it a question of understanding dig-

ital technology and computer structures in preparation for the corresponding professional fields. For in that case, devices without a network connection and a local server could be used. No, here we are talking about “learning factories” in which the work piece “child” is led from learning station to learning station, where algorithm-calculated learning units and exercises impart and test the desired competences. This would then provide the basis for individual learning profiles and further learning programmes.²

Are we to laugh or to cry about such scenarios? Moreover scenarios described by a high official of the umbrella organisation of teachers Switzerland (LCH), which claims to represent the interests of the teachers and thus also of the pupils! And yet:

Even though it is hard to imagine today, that such scenarios could one day become reality, the writer with good reason refers to other professions and industries in which this kind of development is already underway. Media houses, IT experts and self-appointed education experts already have quite specific ideas of how they would like to have this new “learning culture” put into practice.³

PR strategies instead of clear facts

If we do not want to force such prospects for the future on our children and if we want to make true education possible, we must take a closer look at what is happening there, closer, because because skillfully devised PR strategies are used to try and steer the public’s opinion in a certain direction: “The digital world is our future.” “Pupils must be able to deal with technical equipment and use the potentialities of the internet competently.” “Digital competences must be learned at an early

stage,” etc. And it is being made clear as an irrefutable fact that in view of the new Curriculum 21 and its cantonal variants, there is little communes can do but digitalise their schools, which implies high investments. Education as a commodity? A cause for celebration for the educational companies! In view of such developments, it is worthwhile to try and analyse the players and strategies involved. Because such developments do not happen overnight!

Public services over the counter

The process described above began more than twenty years ago. An important step was taken in the WTO negotiations when the *General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)* came into force on 1 January 1995. The GATS was intended to open up services markets worldwide. This agreement was signed for Switzerland in the framework of the WTO by *Luzius Wasescha*, then Delegate of the Federal Council for Trade Agreements and member of the executive board of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (Seco). There had not been a referendum.

As a result, there was criticism from various quarters. There were fears of a reduction in public services. Rightly so! Admittedly the “services provided in the exercise of governmental authority should be exempted from liberalisation”.⁴ However, a demarcation was difficult because in many European countries private and public service providers have traditionally existed alongside each other in the traditional areas of general interest (health, education, energy and water supply, transport, postal services, telecommunication) – this also applies to Switzerland.⁵ Luzius

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“With digitisation eliminating ...”

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should be secured through the same social insurances as with other employees.”⁹

To avoid the involvement of unions, *Avenir Suisse* suggests as well a new “voluntary social partnership”: “It must be avoided that all new forms of employment will be replaced by a classical employment contract which could be negotiated under a collective bargaining...” (*Study Avenir Suisse*, p. 57) – No comment ...

So far the first information about worker rights, which with the increasing digitisation of the working world has come. The

sketched-out measures, written by the Swiss Federal Council in its report of 8 November 2017, and most importantly the question of which school and career education we must pass on to the youth of our society, is to be subjected to further research. •

¹ “Strategy Digital Switzerland “. Swiss Confederation. Federal Office of Communications OFCOM. April 2016. p. 5

² “Effects of digitisation on employment and working conditions – opportunities and risks”. Report of the Federal Council dated 8.11.2017, in response to the postulates 15.3854 of Reynard from 16.09.2015 and 17.3222 of Derder from 17.03.2017

³ “When the robots come. Preparing the job market for digitisation “. October 2017, p. 4. Authors: Tibère Adler and Marco Salvi. Publisher: Avenir Suisse (cited: Study Avenir Suisse)

⁴ 16.414 Parliamentary Initiative Konrad Graber, Councillor of States CVP Lucerne, from

17.03.2016. “Partial flexibilisation of the Labour Law and the preservation of proven working time models”

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ 16.423 Parliamentary Initiative Karin Keller-Sutter, Councillor of States FDP (the Liberals) of St. Gallen, from 14.03.2016. “Exception of the recording of working time for executives and specialists”

⁷ 16.442 Parliamentary Initiative Marcel Dobler, National Councillor FDP St. Gallen, from 09.06.2016. “Employees in start-ups shall be exempted from the recording of working time”

⁸ 16.484 Parliamentary Initiative Thierry Burkart, National Councillor FDP Aargau, from 01.12.2016. “More freedom for the organisation of work at the home office”

⁹ “Frontal attack on employee’s protection by the trade association”. Unia online from 07.11.2017. <https://www.unia.ch/de/aktuell/aktuell/artikel/a/14256/>

¹⁰ “Theses of the Trade Union for a public discussion. Digitisation of work”. Unia, April 2017

"School in continuous ..."

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Wasescha persistently stressed that public services would not be affected in any way whatsoever, and that the WTO negotiations were only concerned with tradable services.⁶ And *Henri Gétaz*, the person responsible for the service negotiations, replied to the critical question posed at that time by a journalist: "I do not see a connection between the ongoing service negotiations in the WTO and the threat of a reduction in the public service in Switzerland – you have to explain this to me."⁷ Perhaps, however, these statements were an expression of what *Renato Ruggiero*, then director of the WTO, had more bluntly proclaimed: "We have a sales job to do. We must find new ways to bring across the benefits of globalisation."⁸

Lack of transparency

The development since that time has shown itself to be the opposite. It was initiated by the separation of the PTT from the lucrative telecommunications branch, which has now been opened to the market. As a result, it was no longer possible to cross-subsidise Swiss postal services with the lucrative transactions of telephony. It is probable that everyone has noticed that since then the postal services have become ever more limited or expensive. Post offices are increasingly degenerating into village stores, and even well-frequented post offices are being closed, much against the will of the population. It is brazenly being claimed that a sufficient basic supply will always be guaranteed. Similar developments can be observed in health care and education. The truth, that Switzerland is integrated into international trade agreements, the ultimate aim of which is to be the complete privatisation of the service sector, is still being withheld from the public. But other contracts of the same kind have since been launched.

Milton Friedman and the policy of empty coffers

We have to remember this political background, if we want to classify and assess today's developments in education as well as future scenarios, like those mentioned in the article above. Otherwise, as mentioned above, we run the risk of falling for the strategies of the PR bureaus, which want us to take these developments for unavoidable and necessary. In fact, there are no pedagogical objectives attached to them, but the aim is to privatise and economise the education system in view of a new lucrative market. A look at the Anglo-Saxon world shows in which direction our education system should develop, according to the wishful dreams of education corporations. There the Amer-

ican economic theorist *Milton Friedman* (1912–2006) and founder of the *Chicago School* provided the specifications. He pleaded for the state's withdrawal from the economy and placed the market in the centre of his theories. The resulting neo-liberalism subsequently became the dominant economic theory. It stood for deregulation and flexibilisation, privatisation and globalisation.

According to Friedman the state education system should also be opened to the financial market. As usual, he argued that competition would lead to better quality and lower costs.⁹ Also, the idea of education vouchers is attributed to him. Friedman became an advisor to *Ronald Reagan* and *Margret Thatcher*. Both pressed ahead with privatisation of public services to a dangerous degree. Thatcher characterised this strategy with the slogan "TINA – There is no alternative". – Friedman was aware that the privatisation of public services might provoke resistance, and his motto was: "The only way to change the behaviour of politicians is to take away their money." The austerity packages being implemented now in all areas of public services in our country are an expression of this strategy, because the neo-liberal market ideology has been well received here, too.¹⁰ The education companies' CEOs have exploited their opportunities well.

When you go on a journey ...

In the late 1990s, *Bill Gates* travelled around the world and made the offer to distribute his software for free to many governments. This happened in Switzerland in 1998, when he visited our country and had a conversation with Federal Councillor *Villiger*. He did not value the direct democratic decision-making procedures common in Switzerland very highly, but instead, he considered the US procedure of a small number of MPs making the decisions to be more efficient and useful.¹¹ But he also found supporters in Switzerland. The former education director *Ernst Buschor* in Zurich took the lead. From 1993, soon after his election to government, Ernst Buschor began implementing his ideas, first in the health and welfare department, then in the education department. He accepted an invitation to attend a symposium in Boston. He then wrote the basic concept for a reform that has been characterising our schools ever since. He did not seek to obtain the necessary financial means by a democratic process, but instead he got it through a newly founded association, which finally raised 2.5 million francs for the school reform project "School 21".¹² This money was mainly used to finance the training of teachers and the scientific evaluation of the project. It was self-evident that

computer manufacturers were willing to supply classrooms with their products at a special rate.¹³ For Buschor it was clear even then, that in future times the public sector would only have to provide easy-to-test basic subjects, the rest would have to be financed by the parents as an investment in the future of their children.¹⁴

Stop – enough is enough!

Since then a veritable flood of reforms has flooded our elementary schools, in which children and their relationship to their teachers became the "quantité négligeable". *Curriculum 21* is part of it. The human factor is missing – and that in *Pestalozzi's* country! What is mentioned in the article above has not yet quite become reality, but the course is set, also including the dominant role of educational colleges in training "curriculum-compatible" teachers specially instructed in their new role as learning coaches and learning facilitators.¹⁵ Despite current findings of development and learning psychology and despite independent studies that point out the misguided foundations of the present reform projects, the transformation of schools is further promoted. Will the continuous descent of state schools be followed by their grounding? It is up to us to bring about a rebound! It is about time, plus we owe it to the next generation. •

- ¹ Brühlmann, Jürg. Die Schule von morgen. (School of tomorrow) In: *Fritz + Fränzi*, Oktober 2017
- ² There is a book well worth reading about this: Lankau, Ralf. *Kein Mensch lernt digital. Über den sinnvollen Einsatz neuer Medien im Unterricht.* (Humans so not learn digitally. A sensible way of using new media in class.) Weinheim Basel 2017. ISBN 978-3-407-25761-1
- ³ cf. Lankau, Ralf. *Kein Mensch lernt digital. Über den sinnvollen Einsatz neuer Medien im Unterricht.* (Humans so not learn digitally. A sensible way of using new media in class.) Weinheim Basel 2017. ISBN 978-3-407-25761-1
- ⁴ GATS, Art. 1, para. 3 (c)
- ⁵ cf. the detailed analysis of the Berne Declaration: Jäggi, Monika and Hochuli, Marianne. *Das WTO-Dienstleistungsabkommen GATS und die Schweiz. Analyse der GATS-Verpflichtungslisten der Schweiz in den Dienstleistungsbereichen des Service public.* (The WTO Services Agreement GATS and Switzerland. Analysis of Switzerland's GATS Commitment Lists in the areas of service of the Service Public). Zurich 2003
- ⁶ cf. Hochuli, Marianne. Online büffeln und fern heilen. Online swotting and healing by television. In: *Wochenzeitung* of 11 January 2001
- ⁷ *ibid*
- ⁸ Alden, Edward. Trade Protectors hit home. In: *Financial Times* of 19 November 2000
- ⁹ "The State's objective would be better served by a competitive educational market than by a government monopoly [...] As in other industries such a competitive free market would lead to improvements in quality and reduction of cost." Friedman, Milton. The Promise of Vouchers. In: *Wall Street Journal* of 5 Dezember 2005
- ¹⁰ This policy has been described for Switzerland in: Pelizzari, Alessandro. *Die Ökonomisierung des Politischen. New Public Management und der neoliberale Angriff auf die öffentlichen Dienste.* (Economisation of things political. New Public

About work, economics, power and economic ethics

A contribution to the discussion on the basis of Arthur Rich's* business ethics

by Dieter Sprock

It cannot be denied: Life on our planet is shaped by work. Most of the creatures spend the time of their life searching for food, the protection of their own life and the rearing of their young. Also the humans cannot escape from these demands of life. But they did not put up with collecting berries and to hunt and raise their children in caves, instead they started to cultivate the ground upon which they settled down and to make the treasures of the earth serviceable to them.

Since that early time, humanity has come a long way: man has "climbed the mountains" after having overcome the fear of evil spirits that might have been behind the forces of nature; he has cleared the ground and forests, he has constructed roads, crossed the seas, traded, built, invented and thought; he has wrested the secrets from nature, has tamed the steam and created a rich culture. With the help of science and his outstanding technology, he even entered the space, and now he is preparing himself, by means of the digital revolution, to once more reinvent the working world.

From agricultural to industrial society

"The process of getting power over nature or the world", writes the theologian and expert in business ethics *Arthur Rich*, "began at the time when earliest ancestors, in the Neolithic period [about 12,000 years ago] passed over from the appropriating lifestyle to the producing one, i.e. instead of gatherers, hunters and nomad shepherds they became sedentary farmers. This led to the the actual cultural development of humanity. [...] With the advent of agriculture, man has, in fact, started "cultivating" the natural world, that means actively use it and remodeling

"School in continuous ..."

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Management and the neo-liberal attack on public services. Constance 2001

¹¹ cf. Gates, Bill. In: Felber, Ursula / Gautschi, Eliane. *The Trojan Mouse. Computers in schools – learning for the future.* Zurich 2002, P. 75.

¹² Members of this society were, amongst others, Anton E. Schrafl, Vice Chairman of the Holderbank Board of Directors, as well as the entrepreneur Klaus Jacobs, who spontaneously provided 1 million. See: Ernst Buschor – A man becomes the thing in schooling. In: Bilanz, 31 December 1999 *ibid.*

¹⁴ This was a comment made by director of education Ernst Buschor at a public event, before the vote on the new Zurich "Volksschulgesetz" (law on state schools) in Affoltern a. A.

¹⁵ Of course, even today there are still lecturers at the universities of teacher education who want to train their students differently, but they can only be found in niche areas.

"The economic ethicist judges economy by its 'service to life'; for its purpose is to serve human beings, not to make humans serve economy. It is not sufficient for the economy to merely produce goods and services necessary for a humane existence – although this is of course a priority in the event of shortage – but it should be achieved in a way that enables 'every willing person' to be a 'fully participating, influencing and thus – by definition – jointly responsible member' of the working world. Work is not only a 'means of earning a living', but also a source of meaning and community. It provides structure and meaning to life. Being active is a defining and vital human trait. Even small children want to work as they imitate their parent's profession during play. And for people who lose their jobs, the loss of importance and social contact is often more serious than the financial burden attached."

it to his own purposes. One of his legitimate children is the modern technique, which, in the course of a long history, has risen only very recently, via various intermediates, to a breathtaking, but also menacing altitude. Today, by doing so, almost all sectors of life, from the raw material economy to human medicine, have been profoundly reshaped, and not only the face of the earth, but also the conventional living conditions have been changed in a way that this process deserves the concise labeling by the term 'Revolution'."¹ (Volume I, p. 47)

The Industrial Revolution emanating from England only in the second half of the 18th century has actually changed the economic, labour and living conditions in the industrialised countries in the last three hundred years more than anything else in the millennial history before. Their ingenious inventions have increased the productivity of work to such an extent that for the first time in history humanity would be able to create prosperity for all. But if you do not close your eyes to the facts, you cannot ignore in reality that the technical achievements have only given a high level of consumer welfare to some of the people, while others do not even have the bare necessities for a decent life. According to the *World Hunger Index 2017*, more than 800 million people worldwide are starving, despite increasing food production. "Even in Western, affluent socie-

ties there is still, and recently again, often alarming poverty, that cannot be attributed back to the fault of the poor themselves".²

Economy and the question of power

That business and trade are also linked to power and politics is not new. What is new, however, is the degree of power that certain industrial giants have been able to achieve, for example, in the areas of the raw materials, chemical, weapons, electronics, and last but not least the financial industries in the wake of industrialisation.

With the increasing automation of production, capital played an increasingly important role in the economy. Increasingly, only financially strong individuals or corporations could afford the necessary investments for the highly developed rationalised production facilities, and this led to a shift in emphasis from the "production factor labour to the production factor capital". The "manager entrepreneur", who has the corporate capital but is often involved in the company not more than symbolically, began to dominate. And so, in addition to the relatively stationary local and national economy, where crafts and industry are still flourishing in many places, a global economy has developed that has completely changed the competitive structure of the market economy.

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"About work, economics, power ..."

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Multinational corporations, since the Second World War shaping the image of the global economy, strive for market dominance and are interested in expanding their market and in restricting competition. "Within the market system," writes Arthur Rich, "we must pay attention to the universal tendency to establish positions of power and in doing so reduce the processes of competition. [...] Ultimately, this reaches a point where production begins to turn into a side effect of the striving after profits when the capital achieves profits without the use of labour and the employment of the means of production, that is to achieve profits through speculative business activities. Large businesses maintain financial institutions of their own that earn massive profits in this fashion, but not through the production and the sale of investment goods, consumer goods or services."² (Volume II page 262)

Under such conditions, the legitimate pursuit of profit degenerates into an aggressive predatory competition struggle, in which it is often no longer "the competitiveness of a company that determines its market share," but the economic power position. The market economy thus degenerates into a kind of "economic Darwinist playground" where the stronger displaces the weaker. One creates "economic constraints" to more and more growth, which the individual entrepreneur may not be able to escape if he wants to survive. Thus, some go bankrupt and others, still in the market, come under ever-increasing pressure to perform. Companies are bought and closed to eliminate competition. There is a kind of economic war, a war, as history shows, not always confined to the economy.

Globally-oriented industrial giants seek to break national boundaries and converse their economic power into political power, giving their multi-nationality an exceptional position. It allows them to circumvent the legal framework of their countries of origin by allowing to choose the sites for their investment freely. "In addition, their economic power gives them the ability to change the existing conditions of locations to their favour (by tax reductions, safety precautions for the sales of their own products in the foreign country, concessions concerning the repatriation of profits, etc.

Judging economy by its service to life

The economic ethicist judges economy by its "service to life"; for its purpose is to serve human beings, not to make humans serve economy. It is not sufficient for the economy to merely produce goods and services necessary for a humane exist-

ence – although this is of course a priority in the event of shortage – but it should be achieved in a way that enables "every willing person" to be a "fully participating, influencing and thus – by definition – jointly responsible member" of the working world.

Work is not only a "means of earning a living", but also a source of meaning and community. It provides structure and meaning to life. Being active is a defining and vital human trait. Even small children want to work as they imitate their parent's profession during play. And for people who lose their jobs, the loss of importance and social contact is often more serious than the financial burden attached.

"Service to life" or "orientation toward human necessities", as Rich also calls it, by design includes "environmental justice" and "distributive justice". An economy that destroys the natural basis of life is as equally uncondusive to life as an economy that creates social inequality with "needless abundance" on one side and "lack of what is most necessary" on the other.

Crucial to Rich's argument is the fact that he perceives economy as it presents itself today not as a "natural product", but rather as an "institution" created by man, i.e. a "historical cultural product" and therefore sees it as modifiable. In doing so, he does not follow the notion that a structural transformation of social conditions would automatically change people as individuals, nor the expectation that an internal transformation of human person would lead to the elimination of structural injustice in society. Changes have to be effected on both levels. For him, the structures of economic order should not be based on theories such as liberalism or socialism, but should be centred around what is most appropriate for the people affected by it.

A human order requires basic trust. Even the everyday steps, actions and decisions require trust. According to Rich, without "good faith" even the best laws and the most helpful structures would be deprived of their effectiveness. If fidelity and faith no longer provide reliable categories for orientation, the human aspect of life falls into disrepair.

The question of distribution

The global economy and its unbounded markets form a complex global network that renders internation-

al cooperation between individual economies indispensable. Previous experience has demonstrated that economic inequalities do not automatically level out; on the contrary, they are exacerbated.

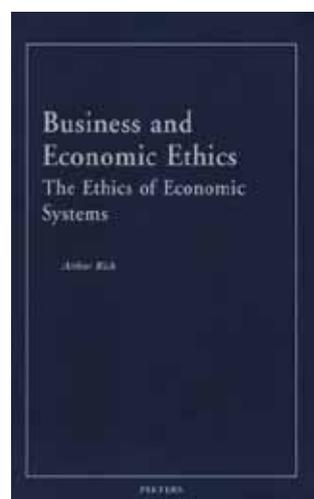
According to Rich, one of the most explosive "distribution problems" is the immense disparity in income distribution between developed and developing countries. While not ignoring the complicity of the developing countries, he blames "confrontational structures of economic exchange relations" between industrialised and developing countries. In order to counteract the "intolerable disadvantages of developing countries in market-based exchange relations", it is necessary to "reorganise economic cooperation" between "North and South" in the spirit of "a participatory structure". In other words, the creation of conditions that enable developing countries to achieve at least a certain degree of equilibrium with the industrialised countries in the long term.⁵ (Volume II, p. 366)

A crucial prerequisite would be the limitation of economic power with the aim of controlling and managing it. In the event of failure and if the imbalances in the global economy continue to worsen, Rich fears "disastrous conflicts" between "North and South" in the future.

Economic ethics grounded in reality

For the theologian Rich, "final, definitive solutions" in the sense of an absolutely just economy are only possible in the kingdom of God on Earth. The economic ethicist concludes that economic ethics consequently must be rooted in the "penultimate and therefore relative". The focus must not be to cultivate visions of an absolutely just economic order and thereby question all existing or potentially possible forms of order because those cannot meet the idealistic standard.

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Foundation Kantha Bopha Children's Hospitals by Dr med Beat Richner

25 years Children's Hospitals Kantha Bopha in Cambodia – the life's work of Dr Beat Richner

Cambodia/Zurich, November 2017 – Quite surprisingly the Zurich paediatrician and musician *Dr Beat Richner* "Beatocello" announced in 1991, that he would soon hand over his "Lädeli", as he called the practice on the Zürichberg, to his colleague *Dr Fredi Löhner*. He would move to Cambodia to rebuild the children's hospital Kantha Bopha in the capital Phnom Penh. The King of Cambodia asked him for that. However, no money was available. The country was ruined after the Vietnam War and the Khmer Rouge reign of terror. The people were very poor.

Dr Richner was well acquainted with the children's hospital, where he had led a mission of the *Swiss Red Cross* as a young doctor in 1974, until the day the Khmer Rouge took over and the entire elite of the country, including most of Kantha Bopha's doctors were confined in camps and torture prisons and killed. Foreigners like Dr Richner had to flee the country. Now he wanted to help make up for the old wrongs, Dr Beat Richner explained before he left.

The story of this Swiss paediatrician, who is willing to give up his pleasant life on Lake Zurich in order to rebuild a destroyed children's hospital under the most difficult conditions in one of the poorest countries in the world, has touched the Swiss population so much that thanks to the generosity of Swiss small and large donors, within 25 years Dr Richner was able to build five modern children's hospitals with maternity, surgery, lecture halls, 2,300 beds and 2,400 Cambodian employees. In 2002, Dr Beat Richner was elected first Swiss of the year.



Beat Richner examines a child in Jayavaram VII, the mother holds the hand. (picture Keystone)

Every day, 2,500 to 3,500 mothers and fathers with sick children visit the hospitals in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. 350 to 550 seriously ill children are hospitalized daily. The hospitals of Dr med Richner treat about three quarters of all sick children in Cambodia. A whole generation of Cambodians owes their health to the Kantha Bopha hospitals.

Behind these impressive figures stands the struggle of an unshakable optimist and genius paediatrician who believes in his mission. And rapidly went forward: The first hospital was opened just one year after the first call for donations in

the "Schweizer Illustrierte", 25 years ago today!

Since then, this unusual Swiss Doctor has served the children of Cambodia around the clock. With his cello he annually gave several concerts in Switzerland to inform about the hospitals and to raise money. In speeches and books, he vehemently advocated his idea of correct medicine, to which people in poor countries have also a right.

He intrepidly started an argument with the *World Health Organization* (WHO)

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"About work, economics, power ..."

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Economic reflections have to be "grounded in reality" and – if perfect solutions are not possible – have to focus on studying the "factual and normative conditions" that – compared to the existing standard – would provide one of less injustice.

The economy's relatedness to reality, as Rich understands it, requires two premises as an absolute condition: "The first is to fully respect economic constraints. It must be stated clearly that what is not appropriate in general, also cannot possibly be humane.

However, this also includes that economic ethics are required to precisely and sharply distinguish between economic constraints that are based on material necessities and those that are caused by organi-

sational structures. These latter ones have ultimately been established by man and therefore can be changed or at least influenced to accommodate human needs. With regard to such constraints, economic ethics again is tasked to assert unambiguously that what is not appropriate in general, also cannot possibly be humane." (Volume II, p. 374)

Even today, Rich's reflections have not lost any of their significance. To us, the guiding principle for a change in economic activity could be the question as to which regulatory structures would enable a change to a more appropriate and humane economy.

¹ Rich, Arthur. *Wirtschaftsethik, Band I, Grundlagen aus theologischer Perspektive*. Gütersloh 1984, 1985

² Rich, Arthur. *Wirtschaftsethik, Band II, Marktwirtschaft, Planwirtschaft, Weltwirtschaft aus sozialethischer Sicht*. Gütersloh 1990. Second edition 1992

³ Arthur Rich was born 21 January 1910 in the Swiss city of Neuhausen. 1925–1930 he worked in a machine factory, 1932 school leaving examination in second-chance education, 1932–1937 he studied theology in Zürich and Paris. 1938 he married Elisabeth Schneider. 1938–1947 he was a parish priest and then until 1954 director of the teaching seminar in the Canton of Schaffhausen. 1954–1976 he was Professor of Systematic Theology and Director of the Institute of Social Ethics at the University of Zurich (1964–1977). 1976, after his retirement, he taught social ethics at the ETH Zurich. In 1985 he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of St. Gallen. He died 25 July 1992 in Zürich.

"25 years Children's Hospitals ..."

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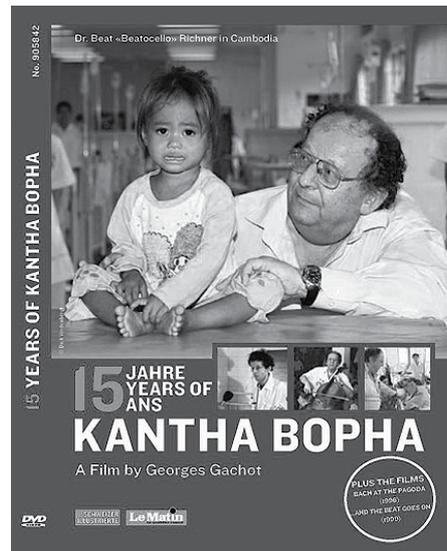
and the pharmaceutical industry because antibiotics were sold and recommended in poor countries that are no longer used over here. Today, people like to forget that he was always criticized by other relief organizations and auxiliary functionaries of various organizations and governments for running a "Rolls-Royce medicine".

But Dr Richner was right: Especially serious diseases such as tuberculosis and others, which rarely occur in our country, can only be correctly diagnosed with the most modern equipment. And a child with heart disease also has the right to surgery in Cambodia. Today, Dr Richner is recognized as a pioneer by experts from around the world: His hospitals have become a model internationally for correct, efficient, corruption-free medical care in the developing world.

Also the architectural conception and the disciplined, tight organisation of the hospital staff impress again and again politicians, doctors, experts and other visitors from all over the world. In Richner's hospitals the hospital care is free of charge for the still very poor population. The staff is, according to Cambodian standards correctly paid, including the cleaning staff. Today the Kantha Bopha hospitals are also university hospitals as training center for young doctors. A close, long-term cooperation with the University Children's Hospital Zurich and its management and chief physicians guarantees the high quality.

After many years of dependence on donations from the Swiss population, the Swiss Confederation and the Cambodian government have also been financially involved in recent years. Dr Richner was appointed a State Department Adviser to the Ministry of Health in the rank of an undersecretary of state in Cambodia. The government and the king have agreed that the state of Cambodia wants to become even more financially involved in the longer term.

But for the time being, Dr Richner's work could not continue without the generous donations from Switzerland. Therefore, we thank all donors for their generosity and loyalty, hoping to be able to

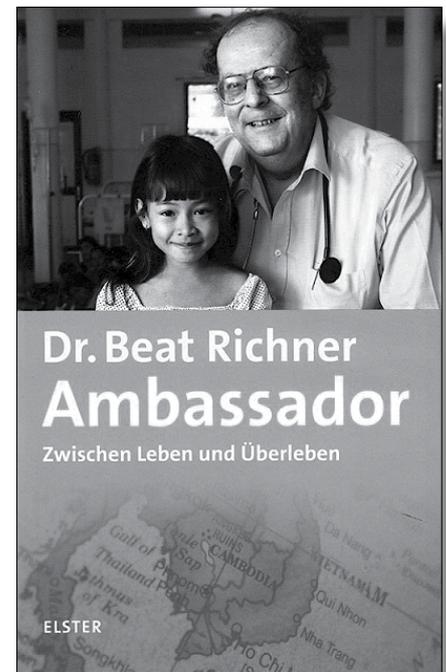


DVD special issue with 3 films ("Bach at the Pagoda" from 1996; "And the beat goes on" from 1999 and the documentation of the 15th anniversary of the hospitals of 2007)

continue counting on them. Every donated Swiss Franc benefits the sick children to 100%. This also guarantees the Board of Trustees of Kantha Bopha Hospitals under the chairmanship of the Zurich lawyer *Dr med René Schwarzenbach*.

To celebrate the 25th anniversary of Dr med Beat Richner's children's hospitals there will be a celebration with information and musical accompaniment on *Saturday, 25 November at 12:15 pm in the Zurich Grossmünster*. You are all cordially invited. There will also be a celebration in Cambodia, with King *Norodom Sihamoni*, Queen Mother *Monineath* and the entire workforce of the hospitals, representatives of the Swiss and Cambodian governments as well as a delegation of the foundation board.

Unfortunately, the celebrations take place without Dr med Beat Richner, who fell seriously ill a few months ago and therefore had to return to Switzerland for care. The absence of Dr Richner as head of the hospitals was a big shock to the Cambodians and the Swiss donors. Dr Richner suffers from a rare and incurable brain disease with increasing loss of function and memory, a tragic and sad fate for this extraordinary man. A small consolation is the statement of his doctors and his family that he himself does not suf-



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fer, has no pain, is well cared for, receives regular visits from his family and friends and apparently has not lost his humour. Dr Beat Richner is not replaceable. Early on, he thought of a succession regulation and transferred responsibility for the hospitals to his deputy *Dr med Peter Studer* and the Cambodian medical team he trained, as well as the long-standing administrator, personnel and laboratory manager *Dr Denis Laurent*, who ensure a smooth continuance of the hospitals.

Considering the fact that in the very first year, skeptics have emerged on all sides, who doubted the sustainability of Dr Beat Richner's work, a 25-year celebration is the perfect moment to look back and be amazed that this ingenious paediatrician and musical clown from Zurich has achieved something that only few people thought possible. One can only say thank you to Beat Richner – and keep silent. •

Dr med Beat Richner, honorary president,
Dr iur René Schwarzenbach, President,
Dr med Peter Studer, Head of Hospitals
Foundation Children's Hospital Kantha Bopha,

Dr med Beat Richner,
PC 80-60699.1,
IBAN CH98 0900 00008006 0699 1

Source: www.beat-richner.ch,

The Paris Statement

A Europe we can believe in

1. Europe belongs to us, and we belong to Europe. These lands are our *home*; we have no other. The reasons we hold Europe dear exceed our ability to explain or justify our loyalty. It is a matter of shared histories, hopes and loves. It is a matter of accustomed ways, of moments of pathos and pain. It is a matter of inspiring experiences of reconciliation and the promise of a shared future. Ordinary landscapes and events are charged with special meaning – for us, but not for others. Home is a place where things are familiar, and where we are recognized, however far we have wandered. This is the real Europe, our precious and irreplaceable civilization.

2. Europe, in all its richness and greatness, is threatened by a false understanding of itself. This false Europe imagines itself as a fulfilment of our civilization, but in truth it will confiscate our home. It appeals to exaggerations and distortions of Europe's authentic virtues while remaining blind to its own vices. Complacently trading in one-sided caricatures of our history, this false Europe is invincibly prejudiced against the past. Its proponents are orphans by choice, and they presume that to be an orphan – to be homeless – is a noble achievement. In this way, the false Europe praises itself as the forerunner of a universal community that is neither universal nor a community.

3. The patrons of the false Europe are bewitched by superstitions of inevitable progress. They believe that History is on their side, and this faith makes them haughty and disdainful, unable to acknowledge the defects in the post-national, post-cultural world they are constructing. Moreover, they are ignorant of the true sources of the humane decencies they themselves hold dear – as do we. They ignore, even repudiate the Christian roots of Europe. At the same time they take great care not to offend Muslims, who they imagine will cheerfully adopt their secular, multicultural outlook. Sunk in prejudice, superstition and ignorance, and blinded by vain, self-congratulating visions of a utopian future, the false Europe reflexively stifles dissent. This is done, of course, in the name of freedom and tolerance.

4. We are reaching a dead-end. The greatest threat to the future of Europe is neither Russian adventurism nor Muslim immigration. The true Europe is at risk because of the suffocating grip that the false Europe has over our imaginations. Our nations and shared culture are being hollowed out by illusions and self-deceptions about what Europe *is* and should be. We pledge to resist this threat to our future. We will defend, sustain and champion the

“Europe, in all its richness and greatness, is threatened by a false understanding of itself. This false Europe imagines itself as a fulfilment of our civilization, but in truth it will confiscate our home. [...] Its proponents are orphans by choice, and they presume that to be an orphan – to be homeless – is a noble achievement. In this way, the false Europe praises itself as the forerunner of a universal community that is neither universal nor a community. [...] The patrons of the false Europe are bewitched by superstitions of inevitable progress. They believe that History is on their side, and this faith makes them haughty and disdainful, unable to acknowledge the defects in the post-national, post-cultural world they are constructing. Moreover, they are ignorant of the true sources of the humane decencies they themselves hold dear – as do we. [...] Sunk in prejudice, superstition and ignorance, and blinded by vain, self-congratulating visions of a utopian future, the false Europe reflexively stifles dissent. This is done, of course, in the name of freedom and tolerance.”

real Europe, the Europe to which we all in truth belong.

5. The true Europe expects and encourages active participation in the common project of political and cultural life. The European ideal is one of solidarity based on assent to a body of law that applies to all, but is limited in its demands. This assent has not always taken the form of representative democracy. But our traditions of civic loyalty reflect a fundamental assent to our political and cultural traditions, whatever their forms. In the past, Europeans fought to make our political systems more open to popular participation, and we are justly proud of this history. Even as they did so, sometimes in open rebellion, they warmly affirmed that, despite their injustices and failures, the traditions of the peoples of this continent are *ours*. Such dedication to reform makes Europe a place that seeks ever-greater justice. This spirit of progress is born out of our love for and loyalty to our homelands.

6. A European spirit of unity allows us to trust others in the public square, even when we are strangers. The public parks, central squares and broad boulevards of European towns and cities express the European political spirit: We share our common life and the *res publica*. We assume that it is our duty to take responsibility for the futures of our societies. We are not passive subjects under the domination of despotic powers, whether sacred or secular. And we are not prostrate before

implacable historical forces. To be European is to possess political and historical agency. We are the authors of our shared destiny.

7. The true Europe is a community of nations. We have our own languages, traditions and borders. Yet we have always recognized a kinship with one another, even when we have been at odds – or at war. This unity-in-diversity seems natural to us. Yet this is remarkable and precious, for it is neither natural nor inevitable. The most common political form of unity-in-diversity is empire, which European warrior kings tried to recreate in the centuries after the fall of the Roman Empire. The allure of the imperial form endured, but the nation-state prevailed, the political form that joins peoplehood with sovereignty. The nation-state thereby became the hallmark of European civilization.

8. A national community takes pride in governing itself in its own way, often boasts of its great national achievements in the arts and sciences, and competes with other nations, sometimes on the battlefield. This has wounded Europe, sometimes gravely, but it has never compromised our cultural unity. In fact, the contrary has been the case. As the nation states of Europe became more established and distinct, a shared European identity became stronger. In the aftermath of the terrible bloodshed of the world wars

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The EU is not Europe

The construct of the European Union and its policy have left a complete mess behind. Proposals made in recent weeks by the President of the European Commission *Jean-Claude Juncker*, French president *Emmanuel Macron* and the President of the Council of the EU *Donald Tusk* to solve the problems, are not convincing. They are banking on even more EU and misunderstand that the EU cannot solve its problems, precisely because it is in its basic understanding already a fundamental source of the problems.

That is why the question of a reorientation is becoming increasingly urgent. But any hope of being able to orient oneself towards a great power such as the US, Russia or China cannot help.

The US, since the Second World War controlling the fate of Western Europe and after 1990 also of almost all European countries right up to the Russian border, cannot and must not be a landmark anymore. US policy threatens the whole of Europe. Not those Americans, who have worthwhile ideas of coexisting of man, peoples and states, determine this policy but other forces. Their register of offenses and crimes is long, and a course correction is not foreseeable.

The large country of Russia is also part of Europe and is almost a continent of its own. It contributes to the debate on a future Europe. Russian President *Vladimir Putin's* speech at the *Valdai Discussion Club* beginning of October 2017¹ has once again shown a sharp analysis of the status of international relations, and that considerations are being

formulated there which should finally be taken seriously. But Russia has its own history, its own problems and is alive to looking for its own, just Russian way.

This applies also to China. Anyone who wants to get an idea of China and its politics after the nineteenth Party Convention of the Communist Party of China (CCP) in October 2017, is well advised not to rely solely on reports in our media. The German-speaking websites of Chinese Media² offer more information. However, it is not only becoming clear, that we learn almost nothing substantial in our media. It is also apparent that also this country has its very own history, its own problems and, at present, it is also deliberately banking on its very own solutions.

The European States should maintain good and equal relations to all the great powers, shape them according to the values and rules of international law and demand that they are respected by the great powers. But there, we do not find models for a future European way – only one principle can be groundbreaking: to become aware of one's own history, to recognise and to identify one's own problems and to go one's own way.

It is therefore very important for people in Europe to find out how an independent European route, an independent route for the individual European states could look like, – beyond the EU's proposals. Their view, that the EU and Europe are the same, must be rejected.

At the beginning of October, a group of renowned European professors and intellectuals from various humanities and

faculties of social science presented a manifest called „The Paris Declaration“³ and which has a programmatic subtitle „A Europe we can believe in.“ In May 2017, this group, consisting of representatives from various European countries, had first met in Paris. They joined because of their concerns about the current state of European politics, culture and society – and, above all, about the state of European thought. Europe is in the process of destroying its great civilisation heritage. Instead of doing nothing or re-diagnosing the „demise of the West,“ these scientists believed that it was important to make a statement and do so publicly. „The Paris Declaration“ is a call for a renewed understanding and recognition of Europe's cultural substance. It is an invitation to the peoples of Europe to actively regain the best of European traditions and to build together a peaceful, hopeful and “noble” future.

We are very much in favour of a serious discussion of this text and invite you to speak up in public on the question of the future of Europe – beyond the mainstream of the EU programme.

Karl Müller

¹ The German «Nachdenkseiten (pages of reflection)» have put a translation of the speech on the net: www.nachdenkseiten.de/?p=40748.

² For example, the German-speaking side of the Chinese news agency Xinhua: <http://german.xinhuanet.com>.

³ The declaration has been published in many European languages on <https://thetrueeurope.eu/die-pariser-erklarung/website>.

“The Paris Statement”

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in the first half of the twentieth century, we emerged with an even greater resolve to honor our shared heritage. This testifies to the depth and power of Europe as a civilization that is cosmopolitan in a proper sense. We do not seek the imposed, enforced unity of empire. Instead, European cosmopolitanism recognizes that patriotic love and civic loyalty open out to a wider world.

9. The true Europe has been marked by Christianity. The universal spiritual empire of the Church brought cultural unity to Europe, but did so without political empire. This has allowed for particular civic loyalties to flourish within a shared European culture. The autonomy of what we call civil society became a characteristic feature of European life. Moreover, the Christian Gospel does not deliver a comprehensive divine law, and thus the diver-

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sity of the secular laws of the nations may be affirmed and honoured without threat to our European unity. It is no accident that the decline of Christian faith in Europe has been accompanied by renewed efforts to establish political unity – an

empire of money and regulations, covered with sentiments of pseudo-religious universalism, that is being constructed by the European Union.

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10. The true Europe affirms the equal dignity of every individual, regardless of sex, rank or race. This also arises from our Christian roots. Our gentle virtues are of an unmistakably Christian heritage: fairness, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, peace-making, charity. Christianity revolutionized the relationship between men and women, valuing love and mutual fidelity in an unprecedented way. The bond of marriage allows both men and women to flourish in communion. Most of the sacrifices we make are for the sake of our spouses and children. This spirit of self-giving is yet another Christian contribution to the Europe we love.

11. The true Europe also draws inspiration from the Classical tradition. We recognize ourselves in the literature of ancient Greece and Rome. As Europeans, we strive for greatness, the crown of the Classical virtues. At times, this has led to violent competition for supremacy. But at its best, an aspiration toward excellence inspires the men and women of Europe to craft musical and artistic works of unsurpassed beauty and to make extraordinary breakthroughs in science and technology. The grave virtues of the self-possessed Romans and the pride in civic participation and spirit of philosophical inquiry of the Greeks have never been forgotten in the real Europe. These inheritances, too, are ours.

12. The true Europe has never been perfect. The proponents of the false Europe are not wrong to seek development and reform, and there is much that has been accomplished since 1945 and 1989 that we should cherish and honor. Our shared life is an ongoing project, not an ossified inheritance. But the future of Europe rests in renewed loyalty to our best traditions, not a spurious universalism demanding forgetfulness and self-repudiation. Europe did not begin with the Enlightenment. Our beloved home will not be fulfilled with the European Union. The real Europe is, and always will be, a community of nations at once insular, sometimes fiercely so, and yet united by a spiritual legacy that, together, we debate, develop, share – and love.

13. The true Europe is in jeopardy. The achievements of popular sovereignty, resistance to empire, cosmopolitanism capable of civic love, the Christian legacy of humane and dignified life, a living engagement with our Classical inheritance – all this is slipping away. As the patrons of the false Europe construct their faux Christendom of universal human rights, we are losing our home.

14. The false Europe boasts of an unprecedented commitment to human lib-

erty. This liberty, however, is very one-sided. It sells itself as liberation from all restraints: sexual freedom, freedom of self-expression, freedom to "be oneself." The Generation of '68 regards these freedoms as precious victories over a once almighty and oppressive cultural regime. They see themselves as great liberators, and their transgressions are acclaimed as noble moral achievements, for which the whole world should be grateful.

15. For Europe's younger generations, however, reality is far less gilt with gold. Libertine hedonism often leads to boredom and a profound sense of purposelessness. The bond of marriage has weakened. In the roiling sea of sexual liberty, the deep desires of our young people to marry and form families are often frustrated. A liberty that frustrates our heart's deepest longings becomes a curse. Our societies seem to be falling into individualism, isolation and aimlessness. Instead of freedom, we are condemned to the empty conformity of consumer- and media-driven culture. It is our duty to speak the truth: The Generation of '68 destroyed but did not build. They created a vacuum now filled by social media, cheap tourism and pornography.

16. At the same time that we hear boasts of unprecedented liberty, European life is more and more comprehensively regulated. Rules – often concocted by faceless technocrats in league with powerful interests – govern our work relationships, our business decisions, our educational qualifications, our news and entertainment media. And Europe now seeks to tighten existing regulations on freedom of speech, an aboriginal European freedom – freedom of conscience made manifest. The targets of these restrictions are not obscenity or other assaults on decency in public life. Instead, Europe's governing classes wish to restrict manifestly political speech. Political leaders who give voice to inconvenient truths about Islam and immigration are hauled before judges. Political correctness enforces strong taboos that deem challenges to the status quo beyond the pale. The false Europe does not really encourage a culture of freedom. It promotes

a culture of market-driven homogeneity and politically enforced conformity.

17. The false Europe also boasts of an unprecedented commitment to equality. It claims to promote non-discrimination and the inclusion of all races, religions and identities. Here, genuine progress has been made, but a utopian detachment from reality has taken hold. Over the past generation, Europe has pursued a grand project of multiculturalism. To demand or even promote the assimilation of Muslim newcomers to our manners and mores, much less to our religion, has been thought a gross injustice. A commitment to equality, we have been told, demands that we abjure any hint that we believe our culture superior. Paradoxically, Europe's multicultural enterprise, which denies the Christian roots of Europe, trades on the Christian ideal of universal charity in an exaggerated and unsustainable form. It requires from the European peoples a saintly degree of self-abnegation. We are to affirm the very colonization of our homelands and the demise of our culture as Europe's great twenty-first century glory – a collective act of self-sacrifice for the sake of some new global community of peace and prosperity that is being born.

18. There is a great deal of bad faith in this thinking. Most in our governing classes doubtless presume the superiority of European culture – which must not be affirmed in public in ways that might offend immigrants. Given that superiority, they think that assimilation will happen naturally, and quickly. In an ironic echo of the imperialist thinking of old, Europe's governing classes presume that, somehow, by the laws of nature or of history, "they" will necessarily become like "us" – and it is inconceivable that the reverse might be true. In the meantime, official multiculturalism has been deployed as a therapeutic tool for managing the unfortunate but 'temporary' cultural tensions.

19. There is more bad faith at work, of a darker kind. Over the last generation, a larger and larger segment of our governing class has decided that its own self-

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interest lies in accelerated globalization. They wish to build supranational institutions that they are able to control without the inconveniences of popular sovereignty. It is increasingly clear that the 'democratic deficit' in the European Union is not a mere technical problem to be remedied by technical means. Rather, this deficit is a fundamental commitment, and it is zealously defended. Whether legitimated by supposed economic necessities or autonomously developing international human rights law, the supra-national mandarins of the EU institutions confiscate the political life of Europe, answering all challenges with a technocratic answer: There is no *alternative*. This is the soft but increasingly real tyranny we face.

20. The hubris of false Europe is now becoming evident, despite the best efforts of its partisans to shore up comfortable illusions. Above all, the false Europe is revealed to be *weaker* than anyone imagined. Popular entertainment and material consumption do not sustain civic life. Shorn of higher ideals and discouraged from expressing patriotic pride by multiculturalist ideology, our societies now have difficulty summoning the will to defend themselves. Moreover, civic trust and social cohesion are not renewed by inclusive rhetoric or an impersonal economic system dominated by gigantic international corporations. Again, we must be frank: European societies are fraying badly. If we but open our eyes, we see an ever-greater use of government power, social management and educational indoctrination. It is not just Islamic terror that brings heavily armed soldiers into our streets. Riot police are now necessary to quell violent anti-establishment protests and even to manage drunken

"While we recognize the positive aspects of free-market economics, we must resist ideologies that seek to totalize the logic of the market. We cannot allow everything to be for sale. Well functioning markets require the rule of law, and our rule of law should aim at more than mere economic efficiency."

crowds of football fans. The fanaticism of our football loyalties is a desperate sign of the deeply human need for solidarity, a need that otherwise goes unfulfilled in the false Europe.

21. Europe's intellectual classes are, alas, among the chief ideological partisans of the conceits of the false Europe. Without doubt, our universities are one of the glories of European civilization. But where once they sought to transmit to each new generation the wisdom of past ages, today most within the universities equate critical thinking with a simpleminded repudiation of the past. A lodestar of the European spirit has been the rigorous discipline of intellectual honesty and objectivity. But over the past two generations, this noble ideal has been transformed. The asceticism that once sought to free the mind of the tyranny of dominant opinion has become an often complacent and unreflective animus against everything that is our own. This stance of cultural repudiation functions as a cheap and easy way of being "critical." Over the last generation, it has been rehearsed in the lecture halls, becoming a doctrine, a dogma. And to join in professing this creed is taken to be the mark of "enlightenment," and of spiritual election. As a consequence, our universities are now active agents of ongoing cultural destruction.

22. Our governing classes are advancing human rights. They are at work fighting climate change. They are engineering

a more globally integrated market economy and harmonizing tax policies. They are monitoring progress toward gender equality. They are doing so much for us! What does it matter by what mechanisms they inhabit their offices? What does it matter if the European peoples grow more sceptical of their ministrations?

23. That growing scepticism is fully justified. Today, Europe is dominated by an aimless materialism that seems unable to motivate men and women to have children and form families. A culture of repudiation deprives the next generation of a sense of identity. Some of our countries have regions in which Muslims live with an informal autonomy from local laws, as if they were colonialists rather than fellow members of our nations. Individualism isolates us one from another. Globalization transforms the life prospects of millions. When challenged, our governing classes say that they are merely working to accommodate the inevitable, adjusting to implacable necessities. No other course is possible, and it is irrational to resist. Things cannot be otherwise. Those who object are said to suffer nostalgia – for which they deserve moral condemnation as racists or fascists. As social divisions and civic distrust become more apparent, European public life grows angrier, more rancorous, and no one can say where it will end. We must not continue down this path. We need to throw off the tyranny of the false Europe. There *is* an alternative.

24. The work of renewal begins with theological self-knowledge. The universalist and universalizing pretensions of the false Europe reveal it to be an ersatz religious enterprise, complete with strong creedal commitments – and anathemas. This is the potent opiate that paralyzes Europe as a political body. We must insist that religious aspirations are properly the province of religion, not politics, much less bureaucratic administration. In order to recover our political and historical agency, it is imperative that we re-secularize European public life.

25. This will require us to renounce the mendacious language that evades responsibility and fosters ideological manipulation. Talk of diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism is empty. Often, such language is deployed as a way to characterize our

"[...] Over the last generation, a larger and larger segment of our governing class has decided that its own self-interest lies in accelerated globalization. They wish to build supranational institutions that they are able to control without the inconveniences of popular sovereignty. It is increasingly clear that the 'democratic deficit' in the European Union is not a mere technical problem to be remedied by technical means. Rather, this deficit is a fundamental commitment, and it is zealously defended. Whether legitimated by supposed economic necessities or autonomously developing international human rights law, the supra-national mandarins of the EU institutions confiscate the political life of Europe, answering all challenges with a technocratic answer: There is no *alternative*. This is the soft but increasingly real tyranny we face."

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failures as accomplishments: The unravelling of social solidarity is "actually" a sign of welcome, tolerance, and inclusion. This is marketing language, a language meant to obscure reality rather than illuminate. We must recover an abiding respect for reality. Language is a delicate instrument, and it is debased when used as a bludgeon. We should be patrons of linguistic decency. Recourse to denunciation is a sign of the decadence of our present moment. We must not tolerate verbal intimidation, much less mortal threats. We need to protect those who speak reasonably, even if we think their views mistaken. The future of Europe must be liberal in the best sense, which means committed to robust public debate free from all threats of violence and coercion.

26. Breaking the spell of the false Europe and its utopian, pseudo-religious crusade for a borderless world means fostering a new kind of statesmanship and a new kind of statesman. A good political leader stewards the commonweal of a particular people. A good statesman views our shared European inheritance and our particular national traditions as magnificent and life-giving, but also fragile gifts. He does not reject that inheritance, nor does he chance losing it all for utopian dreams. Such leaders covet the honors bestowed upon them by their people; they do not lust for the approbation of the 'international community,' which is in fact the public relations apparatus of an oligarchy.

27. Recognizing the particular character of the European nations, and their Christian mark, we need not be perplexed before the spurious claims of the multiculturalists. Immigration without assimilation

is colonization, and this must be rejected. We rightly expect that those who migrate to our lands will incorporate themselves into our nations and adopt our ways. This expectation needs to be supported by sound policy. The language of multiculturalism has been imported from America. But America's great age of immigration came at the turn of the twentieth century, a period of remarkably rapid economic growth, in a country with virtually no welfare state, and with a very strong sense of national identity to which immigrants were expected to assimilate. After admitting large numbers of immigrants, America closed its doors very nearly shut for two generations. Europe needs to learn from this American experience rather than adopt contemporary American ideologies. That experience tells us that the workplace is a powerful engine of assimilation, that a generous welfare system can impede assimilation and that prudent political leadership sometimes dictates reductions in immigration – even drastic reductions. We must not allow a multicultural ideology to deform our political judgments about how best to serve the common good, which requires national communities with sufficient unity and solidarity to see their good as common.

28. After World War II, Western Europe cultivated vital democracies. After the collapse of the Soviet Empire, Central European nations restored their civic vitality. These are among Europe's most precious achievements. But they will be lost if we do not address immigration and demographic change in our nations. Only empires can be multicultural, which is what the European Union will become if we fail to make renewed solidarity and civic unity the criteria by which to assess immigration policies and strategies for assimilation.

29. Many wrongly think Europe is being convulsed only by controversies over immigration. In truth, this is but one dimension of a more general social unraveling that must be reversed. We must recover the dignity of particular roles in society. Parents, teachers and professors have a duty to form those under their care. We must resist the cult of expertise that comes at the expense of wisdom, tact and the quest for a cultured life. There can be no renewal of Europe without a determined rejection of an exaggerated egalitarianism and the reduction of wisdom to technical knowledge. We endorse the political achievements of the modern era. Each man and woman should have an equal vote. Basic rights must be protected. But a healthy democracy requires social and cultural hierarchies that encourage the pursuit of excellence and give honor to those who serve the common good. We need to restore a sense of spiritual greatness and give it due honour so that our civilization can counter the growing power of mere wealth on the one hand and vulgar entertainment on the other.

30. Human dignity is more than the right to be left alone, and doctrines of international human rights do not exhaust the claims of justice, much less of the good. Europe needs to renew a consensus about moral culture so that the populace can be guided toward a virtuous life. We must not allow a false view of freedom to impede the prudent use of the law to deter vice. We must be forgiving of human weakness, but Europe cannot flourish without a restoration of a communal aspiration toward upright conduct and human excellence. A culture of dignity flows from decency and the discharge of the duties of our stations in life. We need to renew the exchange of respect between social classes that characterizes a society that values the contributions of all.

31. While we recognize the positive aspects of free-market economics, we must resist ideologies that seek to totalize the logic of the market. We cannot allow everything to be for sale. Well functioning markets require the rule of law, and our rule of law should aim at more than mere economic efficiency. Markets also function best when they are nested within strong social institutions organized on their own, non-market principles. Economic growth, while beneficial, is not the highest good. Markets need to be oriented toward social ends. Today, corporate gigantism threatens even political sovereignty. The nations need to cooperate to master the arrogance and mindlessness of global economic forces. We affirm the prudent use of government power to sustain non-economic social goods.

"This will require us to renounce the mendacious language that evades responsibility and fosters ideological manipulation. Talk of diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism is empty. Often, such language is deployed as a way to characterize our failures as accomplishments: The unravelling of social solidarity is 'actually' a sign of welcome, tolerance, and inclusion. This is marketing language, a language meant to obscure reality rather than illuminate. We must recover an abiding respect for reality. Language is a delicate instrument, and it is debased when used as a bludgeon. We should be patrons of linguistic decency. Recourse to denunciation is a sign of the decadence of our present moment. We must not tolerate verbal intimidation, much less mortal threats. We need to protect those who speak reasonably, even if we think their views mistaken. The future of Europe must be liberal in the best sense, which means committed to robust public debate free from all threats of violence and coercion."

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32. We believe Europe has a history and culture worth sustaining. Our universities, however, too often betray our cultural heritage. We need to reform educational curricula to foster the transmission of our common culture rather than indoctrinating young people into a culture of repudiation. Teachers and mentors at every level have a duty of memory. They should take pride in their role as a bridge between generations past and generations to come. We must also renew the high culture of Europe by setting the sublime and the beautiful as our common standard and rejecting the degradation of the arts into a kind of political propaganda. This will require the cultivation of a new generation of patrons. Corporations and bureaucracies have shown themselves to be poor stewards of the arts.

33. Marriage is the foundation of civil society and the basis for harmony between men and women. It is the intimate bond organized around sustaining a household and raising children. We affirm that our most fundamental roles in society and as human beings are as fathers and mothers. Marriage and children are integral to any vision of human flourishing. Children require sacrifice from those who bring them into the world. This sacrifice is noble and must be honoured. We endorse prudent social policies to encourage and strengthen marriage, childbearing, and childrearing. A society that fails to welcome children has no future.

"We reject as false the claim that there is no responsible alternative to the artificial, soulless solidarity of a unified market, a transnational bureaucracy, and glib entertainment. Bread and circuses are not enough. The responsible alternative is the true Europe. [...] In this moment, we ask all Europeans to join us in rejecting the utopian fantasy of a multicultural world without borders. We rightly love our homelands, and we seek to hand on to our children every noble thing that we have ourselves received as our patrimony. As Europeans, we also share a common heritage, and this heritage asks us to live together in peace as a Europe of nations. Let us renew national sovereignty, and recover the dignity of a shared political responsibility for Europe's future."

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34. There is great anxiety in Europe today because of the rise of what is called "populism" – though the meaning of the term seems never to be defined, and it is used mostly as invective. We have our reservations. Europe needs to draw upon the deep wisdom of her traditions rather than relying on simplistic slogans and divisive emotional appeals. Still, we acknowledge that much in this new political phenomenon can represent a healthy rebellion against the tyranny of the false Europe, which labels as "anti-democratic" any threat to its monopoly on moral legitimacy. The so-called "populism" challenges the dictatorship of the status quo, the "fanaticism of the centre," and rightly so. It is a sign that even in the midst of our degraded and impoverished political culture, the historical agency of the European peoples can be reborn.

35. We reject as false the claim that there is no responsible alternative to the artificial, soulless solidarity of a unified market, a transnational bureaucracy, and glib entertainment. Bread and circuses are not enough. The responsible alternative is the true Europe.

36. In this moment, we ask all Europeans to join us in rejecting the utopian fantasy of a multicultural world without borders. We rightly love our homelands, and we seek to hand on to our children every noble thing that we have ourselves received as our patrimony. As Europeans, we also share a common heritage, and this heritage asks us to live together in peace as a Europe of nations. Let us renew national sovereignty, and recover the dignity of a shared political responsibility for Europe's future. We must take responsibility.

Philippe Bénéton (France)

Rémi Brague (France)

Chantal Delsol (France)

Roman Joch (esko)

Lánczi András (Magyarország)

Ryszard Legutko (Polska)

Pierre Manent (France)

Janne Haaland Matlary (Norge)

Dalmacio Negro Pavón (España)

Roger Scruton (United Kingdom)

Robert Spaemann (Deutschland)

Bart Jan Spruyt (Nederland)

Matthias Storme (België)

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First signatories of the "Paris Declaration"

Philippe Bénétou is a French political scientist, professor at Rennes University 1, working there at the Catholic University Institute. In 1973, he received his doctorate in political science from the University of Paris 1, and in the same year he was visiting scholar of the *Centre for International Affairs of the Department of Political Science at Harvard University* in the USA. His research foci are political philosophy, in particular the issue of conservatism, equality, liberal democracy and prevailing opinion, as well as authors such as *Machiavelli, Erasmus and Thomas Aquinas*. He is a visiting professor at the *Institute of Sociology of the University of Geneva*, a professor at the *Assumption College in Massachusetts (USA)*, at the *Catholic Institute for Advanced Studies in La Roche-sur-Yon*, at the *University of Marmara Istanbul* and at the *Pontificia Università Gregoriana* in Rome.

Rémi Brague is a French philosopher focusing on the philosophy of religion, Arabic philosophy and medieval philosophy. In 1971, he completed his studies of philosophy and classical languages, in 1976 he received his doctorate. He later studied medieval Hebrew at the *School of Applied Social Sciences and Arabic at the College of Oriental Languages and Civilizations*. From 1976 to 1988, he was engaged in research at the *Centre National de la recherche scientifique (CNRS)*. In 1986, he received his doctorate in literature. From 1988 to 1990, he taught as a professor at the *University of Burgundy* and since 1991 he has been Professor of medieval philosophy at the *University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne* in Paris. At the same time from 2002 to 2012, he held the chair of Philosophy of the Religions of Europe (Guardini Chair) at the *Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich*. Brague worked as a lecturer at the Universities of Pennsylvania, Boston, Lausanne and Cologne. He has received several awards. In Münster in 2009, during a symposium entitled "Europe in search of itself" (15 to 17 May 2009), he was awarded the *Josef Pieper Prize* for "outstanding philosophical writings on the European-Christian image of mankind". In 2012 he was awarded the *Joseph Ratzinger Prize* for his outstanding scientific achievements by the "Vatican Foundation Joseph Ratzinger – Benedict XVI".

Chantal Delsol is a French historian, philosopher, and writer. She is a professor of philosophy at the *University of Marne-La-Vallée*. In 1982, she earned the doctorate of Docteur des Lettres at Sorbonne. Soon after, she was appointed to the *University of Marne-La-Vallée*, where she has taught to this day. In 2007, she was appointed to the *Académie des sciences morales et politiques*. Her research focuses mainly on the history of political ideas. In 2001, she was

awarded the Prize of the *Académie française* for her work.

Roman Joch is a Czech politician, publicist, political commentator, and translator. Since 2007, he has been working at the *Faculty of Economics at the University of Economics in Prague* where he teaches the subject political ideology. From August 2010 to October 2012, he was advisor to Czech Prime Minister *Petr Neas* in the areas foreign policy and human rights and from 2012 to 2014, he was advisor to the Prague Mayor *Tomáš Hudek*.

András Láncki is a philosopher, political scientist, university professor, and principal of *Corvinus University in Budapest*. Moreover, he is in charge of the local *Institute of Political Science*. From 1986 to 1991 he published a philosophical journal under the heading "Lightness". He also taught at other scientific institutes, including the *Vienne Institute for European Studies*. He is president of the "Center for European Renewal" founded in 2007 and he is awardee of the *Hungarian Society of Political Science*. In 2009, he received the gold medal of the Corvinus University of Budapest. His specialist fields include political philosophy, theoretical issues of political science, theories of democracy, but also the topic of feminism. The scientific work of *Leo Strauss* and the Hungarian political science of the 20th century, especially between the two world wars are two key research areas.

Ryszard Antoni Legutko is a Polish philosopher and politician of the ruling party "Law and Justice" (PiS). From 2005 to 2007, he was a member of the Senate, 2007, briefly Minister of Education and then Secretary of State in the Chancellery of the President. Since 2009, he has belonged to the European Parliament. Since 1975, he also has worked as a university teacher. In 1981, he did his doctorate in philosophy. In the 1980's, he was one of the publishers of the opposition samizdat newspaper "Arka". After the systemic change, he habilitated on the subject of "Criticism of Democracy in the Political Philosophy of Plato". From 1992 to 1998, he taught as a professor of humanities. In 1992, he co-founded the *think tank Ośrodek Myśli Politycznej* (Centre for Political Thinking), where he was President from the beginning until 2005.

Pierre Manent is a French philosopher and emeritus directeur d'études at the *Centre d'études sociologiques et politiques Raymond Aron of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales*, where he has continued to teach political philosophy. Manent grew up in a communist environment. Originally unbaptized, he joined the Catholic Church during his high school years. After studying at the

École normale supérieure, Manent became assistant to *Raymond Aron* at the *Collège de France*. He is a member of the *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*. Manent is considered an important representative of contemporary political philosophy in France, representing a position of conservative liberalism. His works, such as "Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme", contribute to the rediscovery of the tradition of political liberalism.

Janne Haaland Matlary (born 27 April 1957) is a Norwegian political scientist, roman-catholic activist and conservative politician. She is Professor of international politics at the University of Oslo. Her scientific interests are in the fields of energy policy, security policy and international human rights policy. From 1997 to 2000 she was State Secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Foreign Minister *Knut Vollebæk* (Christian Democrats). She was an advisor to *Pope John Paul II* and, until its dissolution in 2016, member of the *Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Family*. She represented the Vatican in 1995 at the 4th UN World Conference on Women in Beijing. In the fall of 2009 *Pope Benedict XVI*, appointed Matlary to the *Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences*, of which she has been an academic member ever since.

Dalmacio Negro Pavón is a Spanish political scientist, lawyer and philosopher. He has a doctorate in political science and is a titular professor for the basics of philosophy and philosophy history. He was Professor of Political History of Ideas at the *Complutense University of Madrid*. He is currently Professor Emeritus of Political Science at *CEU San Pablo University*, where he teaches political and administrative sciences. He is a member of the Royal Academy of Ciencias Morales y Políticas.

Sir **Roger Vernon Scruton** is a British writer and philosopher. Scruton studied philosophy at the *University of Cambridge*, where he earned his doctorate in 1972 with a thesis on aesthetics. From 1971 to 1992 he taught at *Birkbeck College*. From 1992 to 1995 he was a professor at Boston University, from 2005 to 2009 at the *Institute for the Psychological Sciences* in Arlington, Virginia. Roger Scruton is considered the intellectual main representative of paleo-conservative positions, in marked contrast to the neo-conservative, but also to the alternative-conservative ("alt-right") thinking.

Robert Spaemann is a German philosopher. He studied philosophy, history, theology, and romance studies at the Universities of Münster, Munich, Fribourg (Switzerland) and Paris. In 1962, he habilitated in Münster in philosophy and pedagogy. Spaemann was full

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professor of philosophy at the Universities of Stuttgart (until 1968), Heidelberg (until 1972) and Munich, where he was retired in 1992.

In his speeches and publications, Spaemann advocates the protection of human life from its beginning to natural death. He therefore criticised proposals to release the killing on request. He justifies this with an understanding of person and human dignity that rejects any relativization of the right to life. Human dignity is not granted to a person on the condition of certain qualities (self-confidence for instance), but solely based on his or her biological affiliation to the human species. He proves that for the Enlightenment the thesis that "people have personal rights before their birth" was self-evident. *Pope Benedict XVI* appreciated him as a consultant and invit-

ed him to Castel Gandolfo in September 2006 to give a lecture on the relationship between science, philosophy, and faith. Spaemann writes critical articles on ethical, political, and religious issues for national newspapers. His positions, especially on ecology and bioethics, are respected beyond the boundaries of different worldviews and parties. In Spaemann's contributions to the philosophy of law, he emphasises the "actuality of natural law". Spaemann was one of the organisers of the "Mut zur Erziehung" congress in 1978, which was directed against "emancipatory" educational experiments with children. Spaemann has won numerous prizes and awards from all over the world.

Bastian (Bart) Jan Spruyt is a Dutch historian, journalist, and columnist. He studied history at the *University of Utrecht* and received his doctorate in 1996 from the *University of Leiden* on a church historical topic. Spruyt belonged to the Protes-

tant Church in the Netherlands, but has abandoned it and moved to the Restored Reformed Church. He is a co-founder and was director of the *Edmund Burke Foundation* from 2002 to 2005. In September 2009, Spruyt was appointed teacher of social sciences and history at *Wartburg College* in Rotterdam. Since 2008, Spruyt has also been working as a freelance journalist.

Matthias Edward Storme is a Belgian jurist, writer, and politician. He studied law and philosophy at the UFSIA in Antwerp (1976 to 1978) and at the *Catholic University of Leuven* (1978 to 1981), both in Flanders, as well as at *Yale University* in the United States. He did research at the *Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Private Law* in Hamburg and at the *University of Bologna* (Italy). Later he became a professor of law at the universities of Leuven and Antwerp. He lectures on Private Law, European Community Law, and Comparative Law.