

# Current Concerns

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and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

## Backgrounds to the crisis in Venezuela

by Prof Dr iur. et phil. Alfred de Zayas\*



Alfred de Zayas  
(picture ma)

Regardless what interventionist politicians, the media and some non-governmental organizations affirm, the situation in Venezuela does not reach the level of a “humanitarian crisis”. True enough, there is scarcity of certain foods<sup>1</sup>, medicines and personal hygiene items, there are delays in distribution, there are long lines for rationed foods, there is galloping inflation, there is anguish, *zozobra*, there are institutional and constitutional irregularities (like in so many countries of our suffering world!) – but hyperboles do not help us or the Venezuelan people, who need international solidarity and good faith humanitarian assistance.

The “crisis” in Venezuela is an economic crisis, which, however, is far from a “humanitarian crisis” as we know from Gaza<sup>2</sup>, Yemen<sup>3</sup>, Libya<sup>4</sup>, Syria<sup>5</sup>, Iraq<sup>6</sup>, Haiti<sup>7</sup>, Mali<sup>8</sup>, Central African Republic<sup>9</sup>, Sudan<sup>10</sup>, Somalia<sup>11</sup>, Myanmar<sup>12</sup>.

It is significant that when in 2017 Venezuela requested medical aid from the *Global Fund*, the plea was rejected, because it “is still a high income country... and as such is not eligible.”<sup>13</sup>

### No humanitarian crisis

During my eight-day visit to Venezuela, I discussed the issues of food and medicine scarcity with experts from the *Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO)*<sup>14</sup> and the *Comisión Económica para América Latina (CEPAL)*<sup>15</sup>. The 2017 FAO report lists humanitarian crisis in 29 coun-

“To solve the immediate problems Venezuela needs facilitated entry of medicines and food, without strings attached. The United Nations should focus its efforts on promoting dialogue between the Government and the opposition.”

tries. Venezuela is not among them<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, the March 2018 report of the FAO’s *Sistema mundial de información y alerta*, lists a total of 37 countries in need of external assistance. Venezuela is not among them.<sup>17</sup>

### Do not forget how it was before Hugo Chavez

Thanks to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), we could convene a meeting with all UN agencies and other regional organizations operating in Venezuela with a view to coordinate advisory services and technical assistance, an initiative that bore fruit shortly thereafter<sup>18</sup>. In this context, it is also useful to recall the situation in Venezuela in the years prior to the election of *Hugo Chavez*<sup>19</sup>, when the IMF restructuring programs including radical austerity measures and privatization of public services, including electricity, led to extreme poverty and social unrest, culminating in mass public demonstrations and the governmental military response, known as the *Caracazo* of 1989, which left some 3,000 massacred peasants. The election of Hugo Chavez in 1998 was an expression of despair with the neoliberal policies of the 80’s and 90’s, a democratic choice reflecting profound popular discontent with the ubiquitous corruption and the enormous gulf between the super-rich and the abject poor<sup>20</sup>. In 1998, the *Inter-American Commission on Human Rights* condemned the *Caracazo* and other actions of the *Carlos Andres Perez* government, referring the case to the *Inter-American Court*, which in 1999 held that the *Perez* government had violated the *American Convention*, and committed extrajudicial killings. The Venezuelan government, by then headed by *Chávez*, did not contest the findings and accepted full responsibility for actions of the prior government.

### Decline in the oil price and economic war

What are the causes of today’s economic crisis in Venezuela? The mainstream media would have us believe that it is attributable exclusively to the failure of the socialistic model ... too many ideologues, too few technocrats, amateurs who do not know how to run the economy. Others have put the emphasis on corruption<sup>21</sup>, which was also a major problem in pre-Chavez Venezuela. Even if there is some truth to that, and the Attorney General has launched a robust anti-corruption campaign<sup>22</sup>, other factors weigh in, notably the fall of oil prices, Venezuela’s principal source of income.

Seldom do we read in the media about the economic war being waged against Venezuela since 1998, the internationally-inspired *coup* in 2002, sabotage of the economy by monopolies and the private sector, hoarding of foods and medicines to be resold in the black market, an enormous level of contraband of subsidized foods and medicines into Colombia, Brazil and Aruba, and the effects of *Obama* and *Trump* sanctions, sanctions by Canada and the European Union, all of which have aggravated the suffering of the Venezuelan people.

### Sanctions – crime against humanity

To the extent that sanctions have directly and indirectly caused shortages in necessary medicines such as insulin and anti-malaria drugs, to the extent that sanctions have caused delays in distribution and thus contributed to many deaths – sanctions must be condemned as a crime against humanity. Already a 2000 *report by the United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights* condemned sanctions as a

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gross violation of human rights<sup>23</sup>. And in the 1990's two United Nations Assistant Secretary-Generals, *Denis Halliday* and *Hans-Christof von Sponeck*<sup>24</sup> resigned their "Humanitarian Coordinator" posts in Iraq in protest against sanctions which had caused more than a million deaths among the population, in particular children<sup>25</sup>, and which they qualified as a form of "genocide".

Although the Venezuelan Government is endeavouring to diversify the economy to reduce dependence on oil, it has encountered difficulties, e.g. in importing seeds to increase its local agricultural production, and it is clear that it needs international assistance to produce its own generic medicines. In the light of the high level of sabotage and contraband, the *UN Vienna Office on Drug and Crime* should assist the Venezuelan government in tackling the international mafias operating in the region.

Professor *Pasqualina Curcio* of the University of Caracas published a book 2017, "The visible hand of the market", which analyses the economic war, and reminds us that in 1970, when *Salvador Allende* was democratically elected President of Chile, *Richard Nixon* told *Henry Kissinger* that the US would not tolerate an alternative economic model in Latin America and gave orders "to make the Chilean economy scream"<sup>26</sup>, and when all the boycotts and sanctions failed, Allende was removed by *Pinochet's* coup in September 1973<sup>27</sup>.

**Concerted action against the country with the aim of "regime change"**

The Spanish economist Dr *Alfredo Serrano*, head of the *Centro Estratégico Latinoamericano de Geopolítica*, analyses *inter alia* the artificially induced inflation, the arbitrary "Dollar today" figures, the manipulation of the "country risk factor" the refusal of banks to process Venezuela's international transactions, the obstacles to obtain insulin and other medicines, the closing of Venezuela's bank accounts by *Citibank*, *Commerzbank*, *Deutsche Bank* among others.<sup>28</sup>

Colombia's refusal to deliver anti-malaria medicine that had been ordered to combat an outbreak in November 2017<sup>29</sup> and the absence of condemnation from the international community manifests the ganging-up on Venezuela to achieve "regime change". The anti-malaria medicine had to be imported from India and the government ensured its immediate distribution – at predictably higher cost.

Countries that continue to wage economic war against Venezuela are stopped from screaming "humanitarian crisis", be-

cause they themselves are part of the problem. *Ex iniuria non oritur jus*.

**What Venezuela needed ...**

To solve the immediate problems Venezuela needs facilitated entry of medicines and food, without strings attached. The United Nations should focus its efforts on promoting dialogue between the Government and the opposition. Alas, it is the opposition that has been asking the United States and others to intensify the economic war against Venezuela, and hence the negotiations conducted between the government and the opposition in the Dominican Republic, supported by the former Prime Minister of Spain *Rodriguez Zapatero*, advanced to a balanced document that should have been signed by all sides on 7 February 2018. The Venezuelan government signed. But, as has been reported in the press, a phone call from Colombia frustrated the two-year process of negotiation with a "No firme". Who gave the order?<sup>30</sup>

**... and if certain countries did not want to prolong the suffering**

Thus, it becomes evident that certain countries do not want to see a peaceful solution of the Venezuelan conflict, but prefer to prolong the suffering of the Venezuelan people, perhaps in the expectation that the Venezuelans will rebel against *Maduro* and express this through a "voto castigo" (vote to punish), or that conditions will further degrade so as to reach the "humanitarian crisis" threshold, which could be invoked in order to conduct a military intervention and impose regime change. Classical Machiavellism.

**Classical Machiavellism against international law**

No doubt, this kind of meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign State entails a gross violation of Chapter 4, article 19, of the *Charter of the Organisation of American States*, which stipulates: "No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. The foregoing principle prohibits not only armed force but also any other form of interference or attempted threat against the personality of the State or against its political, economic, and cultural elements." In the same spirit General Assembly *Resolution 2625* prohibits "armed intervention and all other forms of interference or attempted threats against the personality of the State or against its political, economic and cultural elements ... No State may use or encourage the use of economic political or any other type of measures to coerce another State in order to obtain from it the subordination of the exercise of its

sovereign rights and to secure from it advantages of any kind."

**Also not "responsibility to protect"**

Related to the concept of "humanitarian intervention" (which, for instance could legitimately have been practised to stop the democide in Cambodia and the genocide in Rwanda) is the newer concept of "responsibility to protect", an elastic doctrine which could be invoked – wrongly – to march in. Obviously, what some commentators would like is R2P to overthrow certain governments like in Grenada in 1983, Panama 1989 or the anti-Sandinista campaign condemned by the *ICJ* in its Judgment in the *Nicaragua v. United States* case.

It should be remembered, however, that R2P is a "declaration" and cannot replace the *ius cogens* prohibition of the use of force contained in article 2(4) of the UN Charter. Under no condition can a State invoke R2P without Security Council approval<sup>31</sup>.

**Sabre-rattling gives rise to international concern**

And yet, the increased sabre-rattling gives rise to international concern. Any foreign military intervention in Venezuela would constitute aggression within the meaning of the *ICC Kampala definition* of the crime of aggression<sup>32</sup>. Government officials associated with the planning or executing such aggression should be indicted pursuant to the ICC statute. I have sympathy with another R2P – the responsibility to prevent violence, and this can best be achieved by providing genuine humanitarian assistance without ulterior political agendas.

**Bottom line**

Venezuela is a sovereign people with the right of self-determination stipulated in common article 1 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*. Both Chavez and Maduro were democratically elected in elections monitored by international observers, including the *Carter Center*. If we are committed to democracy, we must respect their choice. After all, the *Outcome document of the 2005 World Summit* was clear in reaffirming that "democracy is a universal value based on the freely expressed will of people to determine their political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives." The Summit Outcome Document also stressed that "democracy, development and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are interdependent and mutually reinforcing," and pointed out that "while democracies share common

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features, there is no single model of democracy."<sup>33</sup>

The solution of the Venezuelan "crisis" lies in good faith negotiations between the government and the opposition, an end to the economic war, and the lifting of sanctions. In pursuance of the principle of international solidarity<sup>34</sup>, UN agencies should provide advisory services and technical assistance to the Venezuelan government, and rich States should facilitate humanitarian assistance in coordination with neutral organizations as the *International Committee of the Red Cross*. The priority today must be to help the Venezuelan people while respecting the sovereignty of the Venezuelan State. My report to the Human Rights Council proposes constructive solutions.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/13478>

<sup>2</sup> Norman Finkelstein, *Gaza*, University of California Press, 2017

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4670011/murphy-young-yemen-murphy-saudis-deliberately-cremate-famine-yemen>

<sup>4</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/libya/unicef-libya-humanitarian-situation-report-july-september-2017>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work/middle-east/syria>

<sup>6</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/mosul-humanitarian-crisis-01-june-2017-enarku>

<sup>7</sup> (<https://reliefweb.int/report/haiti/haiti-humanitarian-situation-report-april-2017>)

<sup>8</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/unicef-mali-humanitarian-situation-report-april-june-2017>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2018/1/5a659f6ca/global-report-10-under-reported-humanitarian-crisis-2017.html>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.unocha.org/story/south-sudan-humanitarian-crisis-catastrophic-proportions>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.care.org/emergencies/somalia-humanitarian-crisis>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/02/rohingya-allowed-return-myanmar-180213195617187.html>

<sup>13</sup> <https://plataformalac.org/en/2017/02/global-fund-denies-humanitarian-support-to-hiv-people-of-venezuela/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.fao.org/3/a-br323e.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> <https://venezuelanalysis.com/news/12754>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.fao.org/giews/country-analysis/external-assistance/en/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.fao.org/giews/country-analysis/external-assistance/es/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.ve.undp.org/content/venezuela/es/home/presscenter/articles/2016/12/08/gobierno-de-la-rep-blica-bolivariana-de-venezuela-y-naciones-unidas-fortalecen-cooperaci-n-en-materia-de-prioridades-nacionales.html>  
<http://mppre.gob.ve/?p=22182>

<sup>19</sup> <https://revista.drclas.harvard.edu/book/venezuela-1980s-1990s-and-beyond>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/silent/index.htm>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.pastemagazine.com/articles/2017/06/whats-the-matter-with-venezuela-its-not-socialism.html>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.hispantv.com/noticias/venezuela/369245/tramas-corrupcion-pdvsa-perdidas-millonarias>

<https://www.hispantv.com/noticias/venezuela/352168/fiscal-saab-acusa-luisa-ortega-desfalco-petrolera>

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Events/WCM/MarcBossuyt\\_WorkshopUnilateralCoerciveSeminar.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Events/WCM/MarcBossuyt_WorkshopUnilateralCoerciveSeminar.pdf)

<sup>24</sup> *A Different Kind of War: The UN Sanctions Regime in Iraq*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/newsline/99pr29.htm>

<sup>26</sup> <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8i.htm>

<sup>27</sup> Peter Kornbluh, *The Pinochet File: A Declassified Dossier on Atrocity and Accountability*. A National Security Archive Book. The New Press, 2003

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.celag.org/las-pruebas-del-crimen-economico-venezuela/amp/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.colombiainforma.info/santos-bloquea-venta-de-medicamentos-a-venezuela/>

<sup>30</sup> [http://www.el-nacional.com/noticias/mundo/rodriguez-zapatero-pidio-oposicion-suscribir-acuerdo-dialogo\\_222314](http://www.el-nacional.com/noticias/mundo/rodriguez-zapatero-pidio-oposicion-suscribir-acuerdo-dialogo_222314)

<sup>31</sup> <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N12/457/95/PDF/N1245795.pdf?OpenElement> para 14.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.ejiltalk.org/what-exactly-was-agreed-in-kampala-on-the-crime-of-aggression/>

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_60\\_1.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf), para 135.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/593ab06c4.pdf>

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## “We have to stop wars”

Interview with David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme\*



David Beasley  
(picture  
wikipedia)

rt. The latest issue of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) magazine “Eine Welt” (One World) in March 2018 makes it abundantly clear that famines are not a coincidence, but are closely linked to armed conflicts. In his preface, SDC Director-General Manuel Sager emphasises the role of wars: “Starvation is [...] not simply the sad end of a human destiny, but it is caused or at least accepted by humans”. With this statement, he refers to David Beasley, Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), who summarizes the current situation in an interview with Jens Lundgaard-Hansen.

“Eine Welt” : Mr Beasley, the number of hungry people has increased again after years of decline. What is going wrong?

David Beasley: In fact, in the last two decades we have made great progress in the fight against hunger. Unfortunately, however, development is currently going in the wrong direction. Around 108 million people suffered from severe food insecurity in 2016, compared with 80 million the year before. The main reason for this situation are man-made conflicts. That is why 27 million people are currently facing starvation. This is the biggest humanitarian crisis since the Second World War.

South Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Syria and other conflict regions – the number of conflicts and trouble spots is high. Are you still able to set priorities or do you feel like Sisyphus?

More than ever, we need new impetus to fight hunger worldwide in a joint effort. The first and most important impulse would be to bring conflicts to an end. The situation of food security in the regions you have mentioned is primarily determined by conflicts. We are doing everything to help people to understand the dimension of these crises how much they affect their lives and how important it is

\* David Beasley has been Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) since April 2017. Each year this programme provides care for around 80 million people suffering from severe hunger. David Beasley worked for more than 40 years in politics, business, and public service and got involved in economic development and humanitarian assistance to those most in need. Between 1995 and 1999, he was Governor of the US state of South Carolina.

“There is more than enough wealth in the world to feed every human being. Nevertheless, when so much energy is flowing into conflicts, it is not possible to make real progress towards our overarching goal.”

for global stability to end hunger. Hunger contributes significantly to global instability and is one of the triggers of the current migration crisis. Our research shows that an increase in food insecurity of one percent leads to an increase in migration of two percent.

Do you receive the necessary support from the donor countries? What about Switzerland?

Fact is that the current crisis requires more money. The response of our donor countries was enormous. As far as Switzerland is concerned, it was and is a great partner. Since 2012, it has ranked among the top ten donor countries. Over the years, Switzerland has become an important ally of the WFP, who strongly supports the new strategy of the WFP. This goes beyond cash contributions and benefits in kind.

The SDC supports the WFP in building bridges between humanitarian aid and development cooperation in crises and disasters. The SDC also supports new, innovative concepts, such as cash transfers to people in need.

In face of all these crises, does the WFP have sufficient resources and power to fight not only the symptoms but also the causes of hunger?

In the long term, the WFP pursues the goal to contribute to the economic development of the countries and societies in which we operate. We are working to provide more children with school meals and to involve physically healthy adults in the development and support of their regions. The World Food Programme will always be strong in emergencies, but to achieve lasting food security we need to improve the living conditions of men, women, boys and girls in a joint and sustainable effort. By the way, everybody can help. Even the smallest donation has an effect, for example via our app “Share The Meal” ([www.sharethemeal.org](http://www.sharethemeal.org)).

What contributions does the WFP make in connection with chronic food insecurity and malnutrition?

We provide our knowledge to governments and actively supporting them in the fight against hunger. Our experts on school meals work together with countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America to set

up and manage their own programs. The aim is to bring poor children to school and to keep them there so that they get a better education and a chance for a better future.

The goal of the „Agenda 2030“ is clear: “zero hunger” by 2030. By 2050, we will be two billion more people than today. Do you believe in this goal, or is it not a little illusory?

I strongly believe in this goal. That is why men and women are working for the WFP every day. Quite a few people accept the risks to their personal safety, if they help those who are most vulnerable. Therefore, we will never lose sight of the goal of “Agenda 2030”. However, at the same time, I have to admit that we will never really be able to end hunger unless we do not end wars. The goal of “Agenda 2030” is simply not attainable if we cannot reduce the conflicts drastically. These conflicts always lead to great food insecurity and vice versa. There is more than enough wealth in the world to feed every human being. Nevertheless, when so much energy is flowing into conflicts, it is not possible to make real progress towards our overarching goal.

Source: Eine Welt. Das DEZA Magazin für Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit (One World. The SDC Magazine for Development and Cooperation) No. 1 / March 2018

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## “If we don’t want a war, there is no way around a policy of détente”

Interview with Gabriele Krone-Schmalz\*



Gabriele Krone-Schmalz  
(picture ma)

*Current Concerns: Professor Krone-Schmalz, you were a correspondent for Germany’s ARD in Russia from 1987 to 1991. With your two books “Russland verstehen” (“Understanding Russia”) and “Eiszeit” (“Strained Relations”), as well as in numerous contributions of recent years, you currently represent a significantly different position from that of many of your colleagues in public service broadcasting (and in the mainstream German media). What made you decide to follow this path? Does your position also have something to do with the experiences you were able to gain as a correspondent in Russia?*

*Gabriele Krone-Schmalz:* When I was a student, I dealt intensively with friend-foe-patterns and what they can do. And I believe that changing your perspective is an essential prerequisite for lighting upon what is generally called the truth. This sometimes leads you off the beaten mainstream track. Especially as a foreign correspondent you have to immerse yourself as far as possible in the respective society in order to understand it, in a comprehensive sense. How else would you be able to explain it? Because that’s what it’s about: informing and explaining – not moral evaluations.

### “Russia is not acting in an aggressively expansive way, but from a strategic defensive position”

*The current NATO states’ version of history is that after the end of the Cold War they wanted to bring freedom and democracy, prosperity and peace to the world. That states such as Russia opposed this endeavour and that Russia has become a power aggressively pursuing an imperial policy and threatening its neighbours.*

\* Gabriele Krone-Schmalz, born in 1949, studied Eastern European history, political science and Slavic studies and holds a doctorate in history and political science, works as a freelance journalist and publicist. From 1987 to 1991 she worked as Russia correspondent for the ARD broadcasting in Moscow. Since 2000 she has been a member of the Steering Committee of the Petersburg Dialogue, since 2006 member of the Board of Trustees of the German-Russian Forum. Since 2011 she has been a professor for television and journalism at the Business and Information Technology School (BiTS) Iserlohn. As one of Germany’s leading experts on Russia, she regularly appears on television.

*What is your opinion about this narrative?*

Exactly, it is the narrative of one side only. The idea of freedom and democracy is not bad at all, but if the implementation lapses into missionary fanaticism and the question of whether it actually improves the living conditions of people, fades into the background, if it is mainly a matter of principle, then this is a betrayal of the idea. There is not just the alternative between an aggressive spread of democracy and a cynical tolerance of bondage and oppression. What is the situation today in the countries of the so-called Arab Spring? We don’t look at them any longer, because this policy has essentially failed resoundingly there. Russia has not denied democratic ideas since the late 1980s, when it was still the Soviet Union; it only wanted to determine its own speed in which to effect this revolutionary transformation, and expected the rest of the world to acknowledge Russian interests as well. A sober analysis of Russian politics cannot fail to see that Russia is not acting in an aggressively expansive way, but from a strategic defensive position. It is true that this kind of action can take an aggressive form, but this is another matter. But it remains to be noted that the West has been the proactive party, and that Russia is the one to react.

### “When it comes to Russia, we throw every principle of the rule of law overboard”

*Although there was no apparent evidence in the Skripal case, the UK government escalated the conflict with Russia. Not only the US government, but also the governments of France and Germany have joined in. A direct military confrontation with Russia is threatening in Syria. Why is the West taking its confrontation with Russia to such extremes? Is a great war being planned? Or does the West believe that Russia can be brought to its knees by incessant threatening gestures? And what then? What is to be achieved once we have managed to “bring Russia to its knees”? Who has an interest in destabilising an entire region? Has confrontation ever brought about anything constructive in terms of human rights, democracy and freedom?*

A whole series of political decisions of the recent past have shocked and perplexed me. When it comes to Russia, we throw every principle of the rule of law overboard. Media indulge in reports of all

kinds of suspicions, and politics persist in using escalation mechanisms.

*George Friedman, former head of the private and influential US intelligence agency STRATFOR, said in February 2015 in Chicago, that there was one factor of uncertainty in the conflict with Russia, and that was Germany. How do you assess Germany’s role? Do you see a real chance that Germany will be able to free itself from its close ties to US, British and French politics and play a mediating role in this conflict? Or is a possible cooperation between Russia and Germany still considered as so formidable that everything is and will be done to prevent it?*

It has become a knockout argument in many circles, that after the historical experience (keywords Rapallo and Hitler-Stalin Pact) no new German Sonderweg can be tolerated. That’s not what it’s all about. It is about engaging in something like a policy of peace in this conflict-laden, confusing world, and about balancing interests in an intelligent and humane way. In this context, the EU is often referred to, and the fact that “Europe” should speak with one voice.

I would wish that, too, but how is it to be achieved since interests diverge so fundamentally? Just to give you one example: The Russian policy in the Baltic States and Poland is not in the interest of Germany. I would have wished that the EU had been able to process constructively both the historically understandable fears of these states and the historically understandable fears of Russia. Incidentally, the quote you mentioned is no coincidence. In fact, Germany has in recent years repeatedly tried to reduce tensions and recommend moderation to hardliners who regard Russian interests as illegitimate per se. Whether the new German government will continue as before, must be shown.

### “Fact is that in the 1980s, we several times escaped a nuclear catastrophe by the skin of our teeth”

*You refer to the policy of détente of the 1970s as a model for a possible way out of the confrontation. Our impression is that many leaders in the US and other NATO states believe that it was not the détente policy of the 1970s, but the hard line of the 1980s that led to the West’s victory in the Cold War. In your opinion, what does it take for the policy of the hard line, the idea*

**“If we don’t want a war, there is ...”**

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*that it is desirable and feasible to win in the conflict with Russia, to be abandoned?*

*What powers are geared up for a multipolar world and don’t want to stick to the idea of a unipolar world? What confidence-building measures are needed today?*

Let’s be honest here: If we don’t want a war, there is no way around a policy of détente. The discussion of whether it was the détente policy of the 1970s or the hard course of the 1980s that resolved the confrontation – temporarily, we must say today – is futile. The fact is that in the 1980s, we several times escaped a nuclear catastrophe by the skin of our teeth. Do we really want to risk this again? If there is a serious political will to détente in the West, then there are two things above all, that can build confidence: on the one hand, the missile defense system in Poland should not go into operation as planned in 2018 – then Russia could refrain from the stationing of Iskander missiles in Kalinin-grad – and also the NATO accession pros-

pects for Ukraine and Georgia should be rescinded. This might open the door for a major security conference, like the ones we managed to have even in the heyday of the Cold War.

**“We need an informed debate and not statements of the belief**

*One of your special subjects is journalism and the media. What do you require from these with regard to the East-West relationship?*

More sober analysis than moral condemnation and more asking questions than giving answers. Especially in connection with such incidents as the attack on the Russian double agent Skripal and his daughter or the presumptive poison gas attack in the Syrian Duma, we far too often find only government positions instead of critical questions in the coverage. The automatic application of the good-evil scheme must be abandoned. Not every piece of information from Moscow can be filed under propaganda. We need an informed debate and not statements of the belief that we are on the “right” side.

**“Everyone able to support youth exchange should do so”**

*Many citizens do not want this confrontation with Russia. They want to live together peacefully with their neighbours in Europe. In politics and in the media, these voices currently have little say. What can citizens do regardless?*

Claim the rights of their liberal societies, speak out fearlessly, fight back, demand that media and politicians take their duties seriously and do not satisfy themselves with trying to guide citizens “onto the right track”. It is time for majorities to prevail, as is envisaged in a democracy. For this it may be necessary to get out of your comfy corner and to raise your voice. Medium to long term everyone able to support youth exchange should do so. This is like a vaccination against bigotry, and hopefully it will last until these young people themselves are in decision-making positions.

*Thank you for the interview.*

## USA – Declaration Against the Expansion of the Syrian War

*cc. The following petition is one of the many worldwide statements made before and after the US, British and French attack against this illegal act. It comes from the USA and was initiated by Dr Maïke Hickson and Prof Dr Robert Hickson on 11 April, 2018. Within days, the petition was signed by 6,700 personalities.*

In the face of the current tense and disorderly situation with regard to Syria where President *Donald Trump* has announced that he will make a military retaliation against Syria and where Russia has declared it will defend Syria against such a military act, many people in the world are concerned that a larger war could be developing now. Thus we post the following declaration and ask as many people as possible to sign it as a voice for a just and merciful peace.

We, the undersigned, hereby make public our resistance against President *Donald Trump*’s announcement that he will, within the next hours or days, retaliate militarily against the sovereign state of Syria, with the argument that the Syrian government is guilty of the use of chemical weapons against civilians in Douma in the Eastern Ghouta region on 7 April. Such a military retaliation is unjust because the purported gas attack has not yet even been sufficiently and carefully investigated by a neutral investigatory expert body. Since the facts are not yet even clear about who committed such a possible crime, how could we then already punish Syria? Such a military retaliation would also provoke a military response from Russia which has a military presence in

Syria upon request from Syria itself in order to help the country free itself from ISIS and other rebel groups. Thus, a military intervention on the side of President *Trump* and his allies might very well provoke a war with Russia which could lead to a widening war involving Europe – to include Turkey – and other regions in the world. Following Just War Doctrine, we insist upon a fair investigation of the facts before entering a war. We remind President *Trump* of the principle of self-defense, which means that a country may only use military force against another sovereign country when it has been attacked by it. We insist upon prudence and truth. We refer our readers to an excellent statement written on 10 April by *Patrick Buchanan*. We ask the world leaders to do everything in their power to stop this cycle of civil and imperial wars. Some of us remember World War II and the effects on so many innocent civilians. Let us prevent another, potentially more disastrous world war.

**Supporters (selection)**

*Dr Robert Moynihan,*  
editor-in-chief of  
“*Inside the Vatican*” (USA),  
*Marco Tosatti,*  
journalist (Italy),  
*Dr Thomas Stark,*  
Professor of Philosophy (Austria),  
*Dr Peter Chojnowski,*  
Professor of Philosophy (USA),  
*Brother Andre Marie,*  
M.I.C.M., Superior of the  
Saint Benedict Center (USA),

*Dr Robert Hickson,*  
retired Special Forces Officer,  
retired Professor of Literature, Strategy  
and Cultural History (USA),  
*Dr Maïke Hickson,*  
journalist (USA),  
*Dr Josef Seifert,*  
Professor of Philosophy (em.) (Austria),  
*Willy Wimmer,*  
Secretary of State,  
Ministry of Defense, (ret.) (Germany),  
*Dr Cyrille Dounot,*  
Professor of Law (France),  
*Dr h.c. Michael Hesemann* (Germany),  
*Dr h.c. Harry Veryser,*  
Professor of Economics,  
University of Detroit Mercy (USA),  
*Steve Skojec,* Founder and Publisher of  
*OnePeterFive* (USA),  
*Dr E. Michael Jones,*  
Founder and Editor of *Culture Wars* (USA),  
*Dr Till Kinzel,*  
Bishop *Athanasius Schneider* (Kazakhstan),  
*Dr Claudio Pierantoni,*  
Professor of Medieval Philosophy  
(Universidad de Chile),  
*Dr Stephen Sniegoski,*  
historian (USA),  
*Prof Dr Alfred de Zayas,*  
Geneva (Switzerland),  
*John Henry Westen,* co-founder of  
*LifeSiteNews.com* (Canada),  
*Fran Griffin,*  
President *Griffin Communications* (USA)

Source: [www.change.org/p/declaration-against-the-expansion-of-the-syrian-war](http://www.change.org/p/declaration-against-the-expansion-of-the-syrian-war)

# France cannot be proud of bombing Syria

## The French want a strong leadership, but an independent one

by Roland Hureaux\*, France



Roland Hureaux  
(picture ma)

I am three times ashamed of France, whose armed forces have participated in the “blows” (a euphemism for bombing) against Syria.

Firstly, because the starting point for these alleged punitive measures is a lie. Anyone having followed the events

in Syria for several years knows that one has never been able to attribute the use of chemical weapons with any certainty to *Bashar al-Assad*. The American Secretary of Defense, General *James Mattis*, recently acknowledged this. This was particularly the case on 21 August 2013 in the Ghouta region, where after an international outcry – being similar to the one we have just experienced – it turned out that it had been a

\* Roland Hureaux, born in 1948, is a historian and had a diverse university, administrative and political career. In the 1990s he was advisor to Philippe Séguin, the former president of the National Assembly. Today he is president of the non-party association “Mouvance France”. Over the last 20 years, he has written about a dozen books and a variety of articles, essays and analyses on political and social issues from a sovereign and Gaullist point of view.

provocation of the Islamist group al-Nusra (al Qaeda). The ban on intervention imposed by the British Parliament on the government has prevented a very dangerous escalation. How could Assad be so crazy as to use chemical weapons – at that not very effective ones – at the very moment, when he has just won the battle for the last positions in the East Ghouta region? It cannot be France’s task to endanger its soldiers’ lives on the basis of lies.

Secondly, because in this matter our country gives the impression that it has completely bowed to NATO and thus to the United States. It behaves like the little yapper running after the big dog – and sometimes trying to overtake him. This is an unworthy role which President *Macron* lets France play. He undoubtedly hopes that military action will make him popular – but certainly not under these conditions. The French want strong leadership, but an independent one. It is very unlikely that they will be grateful to him for this pathetic expedition.

Thirdly, because the undertaking, whatever may be its result, is seen by the rest of the world as what it is: The rich and powerful are bombing the poor and the weak, and this, which makes the whole thing even more pathetic, in the name of morality. Is it really France’s job to take part in such an

action? General *de Gaulle*’s France was estimated in the world, precisely because it was able to defy this logic and disassociated itself from the USA, although essentially remaining its ally. We are also aware of the popularity of *Jacques Chirac*, who in 2003 refused to take part in the expedition against Iraq, the catastrophic consequences of which are known.

In addition, the fate of Oriental Christians is at stake in Syria. On the one hand, the attackers rely on statements of the jihadists, who probably organized this feigned attack of chemical weapons themselves in order to put the blame on the Assad government. On the other hand, Western countries are bombing Syria and continue to wage war against the Eastern Christians, who are one of the main targets of the Muslim Brotherhoods supported by us French people. This position is particularly degrading for France, which since the king-knight *Francis I* had the task of protecting them. It is disconcerting that President *Macron*, together with the bishops of France, expresses compassion about their fate and immediately afterwards fights them in the field.

No, there is no reason to be proud of the participation of French forces in these “blows” against Syria.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

## No reason to rise the all-clear signal

by Karl Müller

*Was everything half as bad? After the limited US, British, and French attacks on Syria in the early morning of 14 April, one might get that impression. But that would be a fallacy.*

The reactions to the coordinated attack of the three NATO states have turned out differently. The German government has approved it, although not directly involved. German media have justified it for the most part – not without criticising the US president. What is particularly alarming: in many contributions from public service broadcasters, for example, at “Anne Will” in the ARD on 15 April 2018, nothing was balanced and serious anymore.

### Should every powerful person again have the “right to war”?

Again there were numerous attempts to downplay and justify the breach of international law. This is the line the NATO states walk since March 1999, in fact with the attack on the Federal Republic

of Yugoslavia and a little later also in their new strategic concept. That has to alert us as much today as it did then. A further habituation would be fatal. When the monopoly on legitimate use of force of the United Nations on the issue of war and peace, established after the Second World War with the UN Charter, breaks completely, the world falls back into the status of pure power politics. Then every powerful person will again arrogate the “right to war” for himself. We are not far from it.

### The public is not informed

For the citizen it is not to understand what purpose the attack of April 14 should serve. The official justifications (retaliation, punishment, elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons potential, warning against a renewed use of chemical weapons by Syria) are not credible. As in the case *Skripal* this is no play with open cards. The public is not informed. Speculation dominates, information is missing.

This is catastrophic for the formation of opinion in a democracy.

### So far, no honest diplomacy in sight

The current call of the NATO countries for diplomacy and talks does not reassure confidence. Sounding all-clear would be premature. That would require that there are honest intentions. The proof is still missing, and unfortunately the opposite still has to be assumed. Namely that it is obvious a continuation of scapegoating Russia. And one has rather the impression that either tactic should come into play to prevail in the new cold – and not only cold – war.

When does one hear from a responsible person in the West a real word of understanding for the position of Russia? I opened several German newspapers and could not find anything going in this direction. As before, the opposite dominates the field – a polemic pungency that has become unbearable. Anyone who makes dis-

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# We must not let ourselves thoughtlessly being drifted into war

*Prudent British voices on the crisis over Syria*

ev. In an interview with *BBC Scotland*, Peter Ford, British Ambassador to Syria from 2003 to 2006, speaks out clearly with regard to the “justifications” for the bombing of Syria by the United States, Britain and France. Like many other experienced diplomats and observers, he fears that hysteria and disinformation might, as he says, “lead us to the edge of Armageddon.” He urgently advocates taking a deep breath and contemplating before “something really terrible occurs affecting the security of all of us” instead of being carried away by “hysteria and distortion”.

## Ambassador demands prudence

Peter Ford appeals to engage our brains and emotions and he warns “not be stampeded by those videos which, I described as being unverified, but which by identical being repeated over and over and over again come to require a spurious credibility. We have to ask ourselves what are the sources of the information on which we are in this stampede to war. They are twofold. And I’m sorry but the media are falling down on the job in investigation these sources. The *Syrian-American Medical Society* which is a pro-Islamist propaganda outfit based in the United States is financed by the CIA.”

After an intervention of the journalist, he speaks out more clearly: “Yes. In all probability, the incident had been staged. Come on! We know how easy it is to fake images for the internet. Look at the images. Any-

body could stage those. And then the second source is supposed to be so called first responders. Who are the first responders? In this case, they are the White helmets, which is another pro-Islamist, jihadi propaganda outfit. [...] The witnesses of this terrible event are people who themselves were involved in beheadings ...”

And finally, he requests to ask seriously how *Bashar al-Assad* had benefited from all this mayhem which would be rebounded against him. “Why would he do such a thing when he was already winning. The battle for Eastern Ghuta was virtually over. Why would he choose this moment to do the one thing that was guaranteed to plug a defeat for him [...]?”

## Robert Fisk’s search for truth in the rubble of Douma

The renowned British journalist *Robert Fisk*, who has been living in the Lebanese capital Beirut for more than 40 years, also expresses great doubts about the presentation of the US-British-French war coalition on an alleged poison gas attack in Douma. For years, Robert Fisk has been visiting such locations personally and he speaks directly with the local people. So did he this time. After the laconic announcement of a Syrian colonel, that he had no information, Fisk walked independently into Douma. “I walked across this town quite freely yesterday without soldier, policeman or minder to haunt my footsteps, just two Syrian friends, a camera and a notebook.”

After a short walk, he met the Syrian senior physician, *Assim Rahaibani*, who showed him his modest subterranean clinic. “I was with my family in the basement of my home three hundred metres from here on the night but all the doctors know what happened. There was a lot of shelling [by government forces] and aircraft were always over Douma at night – but on this night, there was wind and huge dust clouds began to come into the basements and cellars where people lived. People began to arrive here suffering from hypoxia, oxygen loss. Then someone at the door, a ‘White Helmet’, shouted ‘Gas!’, and a panic began. People started throwing water over each other. Yes, the video was filmed here, it is genuine, but what you see are people suffering from hypoxia – not gas poisoning.”

Fisk could not ask the White Helmets. A woman told him that every member of the White Helmets in Douma abandoned their main headquarters and chose to take the government-organised and Russian-protected buses to the rebel province of Idlib with the armed groups when the final truce was agreed.

Robert Fisk adds: “There are the many people I talked to amid the ruins of the town who said they had ‘never believed in’ gas stories – which were usually put about, they claimed, by the armed Islamist groups.”

Sources: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=3j\\_Z1f84Ps8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3j_Z1f84Ps8); [www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk) from 17.4.2018

## “No reason ...”

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paraging remarks about Russia, however nasty it may be, will be offered a wide space. Opinions that go in a different direction have little chance.

I hear reigning German politicians, and nowhere a real word of insight. Does one still cultivate the nostalgia of the “victory” in the first Cold War? Is one looking for new ways to win again today? Why can one not accept that the times of a unipolar world are over?

You have to look at people’s hands, not at their mouths, a clever person said. More than 10 years lasted the negotiations to end the Thirty Years’ War. They acted as

if they wanted to negotiate. But everyone still wanted to win and could not take the other’s view seriously. So the war went on and on – until all were exhausted. Does this threaten us again?

## Russia protects itself

A statement by Mr *Ischinger*, the head of the Munich Security Conference, was remarkable in “Anne Will”. He, who (contrary to better knowledge) blames most of the liability for the present situation on Russia, said, almost in a subordinate clause, that Russia is not in the position to wage a major war. This should be remembered by all, who assume that Russia has aggressive intentions. One has only to take a look at the

armaments expenditure of the NATO states and the Russian arms expenditure, in order to grasp the absurdity of such an assertion.

The fact that Russia has not fallen victim to the aggressive intentions of the NATO states is due to the country’s significantly increased military readiness. A few weeks ago, President *Putin* did not present the new weapons to the world public to announce a war of aggression. If you have such plans, then you are silent about your arsenal. All logic suggests that he wanted to warn the West against ill-considered military actions. The NATO states now have a certain respect for Russia – this is due to the policy of Russia – but they still seem to want to win.

# The digital transformed and individualised school – an economistic concept without any pedagogical foundation

by Dr Marianne Wüthrich

*“Digital transformation is not a necessity for education policy,” says Jürgen Kaube, editor and publisher of the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”, and he adds the question: “What will be the contribution of the internet as teaching material, once the digital industry has done their good business with schools?” Kaube concludes his concise and accurate comment with the assertion that, as there is no scientific evidence for the benefits of digital transformation, there was no need for schools to be re-equipped: “And at a cost that should be converted into teaching jobs so that the dimension of the mischief currently regarded as a necessity in education policy, would become visible.”<sup>1</sup>*

*So much in advance from our German neighbours, as a kind of grounding, before we subject the arguments for digital transformation of school that can be read in the current dossier of the Swiss economic umbrella organisation *economiesuisse*, to critical scrutiny.<sup>2</sup>*

*As the umbrella organisation of 100 industry associations, 20 cantonal chambers of commerce and individual companies, *economiesuisse* represents around 100,000 companies from all sectors and regions of Switzerland with around two million employees and is therefore one of the most important voices in Swiss economic politics. However, in the present dossier on the digital transformation of schools, *economiesuisse* sees itself being entitled to accessing primary school and propagates ambitious plans to revolutionise it, leaving every educator’s hair stand on end. It does not render a favour, neither to our youth nor to Switzerland as a business location.*

*This said, the two people responsible for the dossier are not educators, but chief economists at *economiesuisse* (Prof. Dr Rudolf Minsch) and humanities scholar with many years of experience as a manager and board member (Dr Rudolf Wehrli). At *economiesuisse*, they are responsible for general economic policy and education, a combination of two disciplines that must not have anything to do with one other.*

The dossier starts with the question how children and adolescents should be prepared for the future at the time of the “fourth industrial revolution”. As important factors for occupational success, the authors first list skills that are no new inventions but have always been central in

Switzerland with its well-developed dual vocational training system, such as social skills, logical-mathematical thinking, perseverance and readiness for further education. (Chapter 1: Qualifications required in the labour market of the future, preparation for the unknown)

## Switzerland is well-equipped thanks to the dual education system

The dual education system is the main cause of low youth unemployment and a low proportion of low-skilled professionals in international comparison, which is also noted in the dossier.<sup>3</sup> The strengths of the Swiss education system are also confirmed by *economiesuisse*: good adaptability of apprenticeship to the conditions of the labour market, early self-employment of young people in working life, extensive vocational training and high permeability. Further adjustments of job profiles and more computer science teaching are required. (Chapter 2: What consequences does digital transformation have for the education system?)

It should be added that this positive assessment of the Swiss vocational training system will only be realistic if our children in elementary school learn everything they need for their adult lives. The elementary school is not to be an experimental laboratory. As an example, the planned revolution of language- and mathematics lessons according to the dossier – and according to the Curriculum 21(!) – will be scrutinised.

## Digital transformation and individualisation leading to a two-class society

The fact that an increasing amount of our school-leavers brings a lack of knowledge in the basic subjects of German and Mathematics as a result of school reforms, the vocational schools and the trainers in the companies have lamented for a long time. Therefore, the school must first of all provide the necessary knowledge in German and mathematics and provide the necessary teaching time, as far as *economiesuisse* agrees with pedagogical experts. (Chapter 3: What consequences does digital transformation have for the school?)

So, how should this time be used? It needs a combination of “classroom teaching” and e-learning, according to the dossier. The fact that even at universities online courses lead to high dropout rates and moderate learning success shows the im-

portance of social interaction for learning success.

## “Social interaction” can mean many things

Thanks to digital transformation, German and mathematics could be taught in a completely individualised way, according to their theory: “The use of digital teaching aids will be really significant if didactics and pedagogy change as a result. The potential of digital transformation for teaching is huge. For the first time, teachers are enabled to cope with a completely individualised lesson in terms of organisation. Individualisation is made possible, among other things, by the availability of real-time data on the learner’s behaviour, learning progress and solution strategies. (Chapter 3) Thanks to the suitable software, each child can be kept busy according to their level, without the teacher having to prepare twenty different worksheets each day: “The heterogeneity or differences in the learners’ skills are too great for each to be at the same level of knowledge at the end of the school year. Therefore it would be important, if teaching took this heterogeneity into account adequately. However, the necessary individualisation of the teaching failed in the past because the teachers amount of work exploded. They had to put together an individual learning programme for each pupil to monitor and document the learning success.”

## Radical transformation of the teaching profession and of the teacher personality

The learning control is carried out by the software, here in the truest sense of the words “keeping an account”, whether and how the child learns and makes progress, everything is digitally documented and monitored, and based on it the child is served with the next digitally created learning portion. This is not really a lesson. There is no teacher at work here, but a supervisor taking care that everyone is busy. On the other hand the profession of the teacher, involves something completely different: his high task is precisely to form a class community out of his “heterogeneous” crowd, working with the pupils and the pupils among themselves working on the subject matter and practicing in many different ways so that – whenever possible

### "The digital transformed and ..."

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– every child can be taken along and reach the learning objectives. Admittedly, at times of integration and inclusion, sometimes this is hardly possible, and additional teachers have to be deployed in the classroom. For those students, who learn quickly and easily, additional tasks will always be found, or they can deepen their knowledge by explaining their neighbours the matter – we should not worry about them as much as it is usually done today. Such teachers – real teacher personalities – are no longer desirable in the age of digital transformation with the string-pullers (but still with many parents and teachers!). The reorganisation of the teaching profession is busily prepared at the Swiss teacher training colleges, and *economiesuisse* unfortunately joins the chorus of those who are responsible for the demise of our good elementary school: "The teacher training colleges are required to have all teachers trained with the necessary skills in the area of digital transformation. This does not only involve the teachers in training. The already active teachers must also be made fit for digital transformation."<sup>4</sup> And under point 4:" The appropriate use of digital transformation in the classroom requires a rethinking of the teachers. They do not have to and can no longer have better knowledge everywhere than the learners. [...] "As if the teaching profession were to play the know-it-all to the students!

### Turning away from the human right to education and equal opportunities – IBM and Bertelsmann make it possible

Enlightening are the sources to which *economiesuisse* refers (in chapter 3 of the dossier) its in no way pedagogically justified advice for elementary school:

- a Swiss private school which has been using software developed jointly with *IBM Switzerland* for some years, with completely individualised employment of the students and total supervision of their doing.
- a book of *Jörg Dräger* and *Ralph Müller-Eiselt* "Die digitale Bildungsrevolution. Der radikale Wandel des Lernens und wie wir ihn gestalten können" (The digital transformed education revolution. The radical change of learning and how we can shape it). Main thing in mind of the two authors is the business with schools, because both belong

to *Bertelsmann Foundation*, Dräger as board member, Müller-Eiselt researches for the Bertelsmann Foundation, how the digital transformation changes our society, tweeting and blogging [...] about the education of tomorrow.

- The New York project "New Classroom", presented by Dräger/Müller-Eiselt as 2-minutes-youtube-animation, is apparently very important for the *economiesuisse* authors. On its lean base they paint a picture, what will happen in our elementary schools in future – without having any experience and idea about the teachers profession and teaching: In these subjects [German and mathematics] students shouldn't participate according to their age, but according to their skills in learning groups. For example the students would be taught between 8 and 10 o'clock in order to return to their former class. [...] A teacher could teach, for example, the second class and at the same time group B in mathematics, where pupils from the first, second and third class are sitting together. In this setting individualised lessons can be combined with common introductory lessons or group work. [...] The educational remedial teachers would at the same time take over those children, who need special support."

An eerie vision of the future! Our elementary school may not be an experimental field for inexhaustible ideas of economists, who believe that lessons are possible as a fully automated "setting". Especially oppressive, if such an attempt with living people is already planned with small children at the beginning of their school time. First grader, who don't find their way in the digital transformed learning world, get cheated concerning their human right on education and equal opportunities and are sorted out from the beginning: even in the digital organised 20:80 society one needs still bad paid auxiliary staff.

One more word on the school language German: language can only be learned in relation: with common reading and talking, with writing, getting corrections and improve, with grammar and building sentences, with spelling rules and vocabulary exercises and with reading, reading, reading ... that's for sure. Surely not with individualised cloze texts and "creative" spontaneous writing without teacher corrections, as planned by Curriculum 21

and apparently also by the authors of the dossier.

### Opening of Swiss elementary school for Public-Private Partnership?

Finally, following requirement of *economiesuisse* has to be mentioned, namely the intervention of private companies in the public elementary school: "Open the classrooms! A teacher does not have to cover all aims of the curriculum alone. [...] An opening of the classroom should be considered too: Lessons on computer science could be done by relatives or acquaintances of the teacher or students [as unpaid auxiliary staff?] in cooperation with the actual teacher. [...] Also elementary school should be more open concerning Public-Private Partnership. In order to force the introduction of computer science in the classroom, cooperations between private companies and schools can be useful.(Chapter 3, point 5)

Here the circle closes: Finally here every reader should realise whose interests have the priority in this dossier – not those of the children and adolescents, not even the apprentices – what actually could be expected by *economiesuisse* – but those of Apple, Microsoft, Bertelsmann & Co . *Economiesuisse*, posing as Swiss economic umbrella association, does not only have to represent only a few globalised companies, but primarily the numerous in Switzerland rooted SME (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) and also bigger companies. These are urgently looking for appropriate graduates from a scholastic and human point of view who are capable and ready to cooperate and to be guided. The total digital transformation and isolation of the children in elementary school is a conceivable bad recipe for the preservation of the good Swiss business location.●

Note to the footnotes:

As a "contemporary" online essay the dossier "Digitalisierung – Herausforderungen und Chancen für die Schulen" doesn't contain any page numbers, but only 4 chapters and a series of statistical diagrams. Therefore, the indication of the cited parts is only about possible.

<sup>1</sup> Kaube, Jürgen. Grosser Unfug. Digitalisierungskommentar. *Faz.net* from 31.3.2018

<sup>2</sup> "Digitalisierung – Herausforderungen und Chancen für die Schule" from 9.2.2018. <https://www.economiesuisse.ch/de/dossiers/digitalisierung-herausforderungen-und-chancen-fuer-die-schule>

<sup>3</sup> comp. graphics 2 of the *Weltbank* 2016 in chapter 1

<sup>4</sup> "Digitalisierung – Herausforderungen und Chancen für die Schule" from 9.2.2018. In chapter 3 point 6: "Verändert die Digitalisierung die Lerninhalte der Obligatorischen Schule?"

All quotations translated by *Current Concerns*

# Natural law and popular sovereignty – important elements of democracy in Switzerland (part 2)

## Ignaz Paul Vital Troxlers conception of democracy

by Dr phil. René Roca, Research Institute Direct Democracy<sup>1</sup>

The year 2016 was a year of commemoration for Troxler (*Troxler-Gedenkjahr*). 152 years ago, on 6 March 1866, Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler (born 1780) died. He was a doctor, philosopher, pedagogue, and politician, and made outstanding achievements in all these areas. Various events during the year of commemoration were dedicated to Troxler's work. Conference reports and other documents are available on the worthwhile website [www.troxlergedenkjahr2016.ch](http://www.troxlergedenkjahr2016.ch). The research on Troxler's extensive work will continue.

In the following, the second part of a written presentation will be published, which the author has held during a symposium in the former St Urban Monastery about Troxler's work. The first part (see "Current Concerns" No. 31, December 2017) sheds light on Troxler's career and the training of his legal and political philosophy, which he founded on natural law. Part 2 focuses specifically on Troxler's definition of popular sovereignty and his concept of democracy.

### Popular sovereignty as a consequence

In the following years Ignaz Paul Troxler developed his concept of democracy, constantly referring to his approach to natural law as he had laid it down in his treatise "*Philosophical theory of nature and law*". The crucial term in this regard was "*popular sovereignty*" (*Volkssouveränität*). Using the most important works of Troxler's, it will be demonstrated in the following article how he defined and characterized this term.

### 1822 – the Helvetian Society

Troxler was appointed director of the *Helvetian Society* in 1822. Originally this society had been founded in 1761/1762 and its members, all of them adherents to the enlightenment, supported a new concept of natural law emancipated from confessional preconditions. The aim of the society was to further reforms in contemporary Switzerland. A yearly conference at first in Bad Schinznach and later also in other places in Switzerland served as a platform for the young intellectuals and politicians. Their hope was to reinvigorate the lost sense of commitment to the *bonum commune* by overcoming the confessional antagonisms, with a new view on national politics. Due to international events there had been a gap in the activities between 1798 (Helvetik) and 1807, when Liberals renewed the efforts during the mediation and started the yearly conferences anew.<sup>2</sup>

As the president Troxler enjoyed the privilege to give the opening address in Schinznach. This speech which was later published under the title "*What has been lost, what is to be gained*" would become another crucial political text for him. Six months previously Troxler had been removed from his teaching position in Luzern but he decided to make his speech anyway, in a less radical tone.<sup>2</sup>

Troxler called for a moral approach to politics and underscored this with philosophical-historical arguments based on thoughts of the Swiss historian *Johannes Müller* (1752-1809): what was to be aimed for was the "seed of renewal of the old Swiss Confederation into new life".<sup>3</sup> A new consciousness of the state was to be established:

*"This [i.e. the state] appeared to be solitary and solely concerned with matters of earthly existence. [...] This way the state lost its soul, and in-order to continue on the road of separation from the spiritual world with all of its powers, the state had to throw over board more and more, at the end even reason and nature, freedom and the law, in-order to survive."*<sup>4</sup>

Troxler emphasised that, on the contrary, the state "[...] in its essence as the great community of men was to be regarded the same way as human nature in its development in a single human being"<sup>5</sup>. And he continues:

*"Therefore the true human state requires a free public life of the people, and this life can only be achieved in the unification of what is called political freedom of the citizens, on the whole and in all its details. [...] The force of the nation alone is the true fountain of life."*<sup>6</sup>

Strikingly, Troxler postulates a moralistic approach to politics. In his argument Troxler makes an excursion into the history of the founding fathers of the Swiss confederation and shows the importance of moral foundations which had been laid then:

*"In those days the confederation had not been fully developed yet in all shapes and details, but the essence, content and aim of the Covenant, the reason why it was there, was already represented in the purest sense. They [i.e. the fathers of*

*the Federal Charter of 1291] provided the living proof that fear of God, comradeship, commitment to the common good, love of freedom, loyalty, bravery and justice are the foundations from which states will flourish, and provide happiness, power and fame to the people."*<sup>7</sup>

Troxler goes on to demonstrate, citing *Johannes Müller*, how during Swiss history these virtues declined and were lost due to the habit of conquering neighbouring regions and going abroad as mercenaries, because "[...] ruling gives pleasure and reaving [i.e. exploiting subdued regions] gives profit"<sup>8</sup>, and because "greed for money is the weakness of the Swiss"<sup>9</sup>. He diagnoses a total loss of the above-mentioned virtues in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and that the principle of all government emanating from the people<sup>10</sup> had been ignored. Government and people had been alienated from each other totally, aristocratic structures replaced the pre-modern democracies in many cantons. In this connection Troxler describes an "obvious decline of the republic" and the people being in a "state of bondage"<sup>11</sup>, in other words the decline of autonomy and popular sovereignty in the various cantons. While Troxler did not want to return to the old Federation, he argued to reinvigorate the spirit of the "eternal covenants"<sup>12</sup>, because "only the people who live their lives in reason and freedom and have rooted their lives in virtue as their true objective, are really happy and powerful, striving for that of God."<sup>13</sup>

This "spirit" was what had been lost, according to Troxler, and what was to be regained. For him the basics of republicanism were not confined to a certain type of constitution but had to be lived by the citizens in their values and sense of history. In his address to the Helvetian society Troxler defined popular sovereignty as an "internal moral force", which acts as the source of external political life of the people, without which "[...] human nature and its force cannot develop unhindered and express itself"<sup>14</sup>:

*"All people were great and strong only insofar as they were able to reach beyond the state, its powers and laws, and reach out towards the sources from which these laws and powers emanate. No people has been created just for this dull, low*

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*life commonly referred to as wealth and quietness.*"<sup>15</sup>

At the end of his speech, which had thrilled the members of the Helvetic society into standing ovations, Troxler demanded politics inspired by the "eternal fountain" of the moral force.

### **1830 – the breakthrough towards representative democracy with the regeneration**

In 1830 – Troxler was a professor in Basel at that time and supported the opposition in the regional parliament – he became involved with the Regeneration movement of Luzern and published a petition to the Great city council of Luzern in November 1830. He outlined a detailed political programme and reclaimed full popular sovereignty referring to the solemn abdication of the patricians in 1798. Moreover, he demanded a constitution legitimised by the people with just representation of the city, municipalities and the countryside. He also took up the line of thoughts from his Schinznach address and applied it to recent events in Swiss history. While the "old freedom" had been reinstalled in 1798 when the powers of the state had been given back to the people, this regained freedom however had been "utterly destroyed" by the patricians with their restauration constitution of 1814. This constitution had been imposed without ever consulting the people who had never sanctioned or legitimised it. Thereby he acknowledged what had been achieved in the Napoleonic era and emphasised that development in Switzerland could only be an "organic evolution" of democracy and constitution in his point of view.<sup>16</sup>

On 21 November 1830 Troxler's petition was discussed at a people's convention in Sursee. Eighteen deputies were appointed who were to deliver the petition with the list of signatures to the government. The text stated that this was about "natural and documented rights":

*"This is popular sovereignty, apart from which there is no other; it is its realization by representative democracy; it is political freedom and equality of all citizens, instead of privileges for some families and individuals while others are disenfranchised."*<sup>17</sup>

With this text Troxler decisively influenced the Luzern regeneration movement. He made it plain that his concept of "popular sovereignty" was at the centre of his arguments as a "natural and documented right of human beings and citizens"<sup>18</sup>, and he also explained how it was

to be practically achieved. A constitutional assembly, elected by equal and secret vote, was to draft a new constitution and include the wishes of the people, afterwards the people would vote and legitimise it. Afterwards, the people would elect their representatives for the legislative body in another equal and secret vote. A just representation of city, municipalities and countryside was to be guaranteed. Government was to be performed by representatives who had to face elections on regular terms. This concept of popular sovereignty was crucial pre-condition for the republic in Troxler's opinion: "The



*Troxler-Portrait from Iduna Belke, Beromünster 1948. Artist und date unknown. (picture [www.ipvtroxler.ch](http://www.ipvtroxler.ch))*

main foundation of the republic is popular sovereignty in its entirety, and its realisation by representative democracy [...]"<sup>19</sup>

With his memorandum, which was a petition at the same time and had been signed by more than 3,000 citizens, Troxler had explicitly referred to the Napoleonic revolution in Switzerland and to its consequences in the canton of Luzern. As shown above, the petition discussed the concept of human rights, and may be referred to as a milestone in the constitutional development in the canton of Luzern. Since the patrician families had abdicated in 1798, Troxler argued, all differences between places, families and persons had been eliminated, "eternally destroyed, and popular sovereignty as it is rooted in natural law had been established in the realm of the state as well"<sup>20</sup>. Similar to the liberals of the city Troxler favoured representative democracy at that time but leaned towards the democrats of the countryside with other demands, thereby fulfilling a bridging function.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, the petition was successful, under the constant public pressure the City council gave in and approved the election

of a constitutional assembly. The people of the canton Luzern voted on the new constitution on 30 January 1831 and approved it with a broad majority. The patrician regime, which had come to power with the restauration of 1814, subsequently abdicated and a majority of liberal politicians took over. Like ten more so-called regenerated cantons in Switzerland, Luzern now had a representative-liberal constitution.

### **1841 – the step to pure or direct democracy**

Troxler also played a decisive role in the political conflicts in various cantons during the Regeneration (1830-1848).

In particular he supported his home canton of Lucerne, where an overall revision of the cantonal constitution was debated from 1839 to 1841, including the introduction of a veto against laws. In the course of this dispute, Troxler made a decisive contribution to the theory of direct democracy.

He was one of the first to develop his model of representative democracy further into a model of direct democracy, wanting to concretise popular sovereignty with popular rights, in order - as he expressed it - "to make the people and their sovereignty"<sup>22</sup> become a truth. It is illuminating that Troxler, in the course of the dispute of 1841, firstly applied the concept of popular sovereignty to the entire people (i.e. also to women<sup>23</sup>) and secondly in a sense of natural law also to former and following generations: "The Lucerne public as sovereign is not just the generation living now, not just all those citizens who voted on that day in May."<sup>24</sup>

As early as 1839, when the revision debate began, Troxler made it clear that he no longer supported the ruling liberals, but the conservative-rural democrats, who wanted to introduce more popular rights. Troxler had a clear and pivotal guiding principle which expressed his change of heart from representative to direct democracy:

*History and experience tell us that only greater and more direct influence of the people on our public affairs can guarantee more popular leadership and a happy course of our general life. Disbelief and distrust against the people, aversion and contempt of the people are the Republican's greatest sin and the very root of spiritual and secular aristocracy, or rather oligarchy.*<sup>25</sup>

In 1831 Troxler had, as shown, still been a vehement advocate of a liberal-representative constitution. Now, with the experience of a time under liberal rule in

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some cantons, and especially in Lucerne, he pleaded for a further concretisation of popular sovereignty.

Troxler saw the liberals of the city of Lucerne in particular as the new “rule of lords”. Therefore, the influence of the people on public affairs should now become greater and more direct. After a sometimes fierce dispute of the revision and after the ten-year period of rigidity laid down in the 1830 constitution, the people of Lucerne elected a Constitutional Council in 1841, composed in its majority of catholic-conservative members and rural democrats.

The Council set up a Commission to prepare a constitutional text. When it was finally published, Troxler studied the text of the constitution very carefully and basically criticised only the short period of time available to the population to read the draft and generate suggestions. Apart from church politics, he was otherwise full of praise for the draft:

*It is gratifying, soothing and encouraging to see how finally a constitution or a basic, an original order of the state has emerged from the people and for the people. [...] The influence of the people has become a truth, an achievement reached by the people themselves. It is the only way a nation can arise.<sup>26</sup>*

In this context, Troxler also spoke of the “feeling of a people” and thus aimed at his organic view on history:

*The feeling of a people at its respective level of development and education is legislative and should be self-constituting. This principle applies to church and state, is so profound and reaches so far, that if Catholicism and republicanism had not entered this feeling of the people and had not found their natural vivid reasoning in it, the lawmakers and rulers would search and strive for sanctions and guarantees in vain.<sup>27</sup>*

However, Troxler clearly distanced himself from the church policies of the conservative-democratic commission and the Constitutional Council and held that a church constitution and a state constitution were two fundamentally different things. Troxler saw in the present draft a clear predominance of the Roman Catholic Church over the state. He therefore asked himself “whether the Canton of Lucerne had been declared a Roman province”<sup>28</sup>? Troxler himself saw the church and state “as two different, independent, living beings, which however mutually and alternately interpenetrate and drive each other to perfection”<sup>29</sup>. He developed

the thesis of a “collegial system” on the relationship of state and church, which meant that both had their *raison d’être* and were to be protected from unjustified mutual interference. But the people still remains central: “True democracy recognises the people as essential and vivid in both [referring to church and state, the author] and guarantees its right and its freedom in faith and conscience, as well as in ex-



istence and change.”<sup>30</sup> In the main however, as far as popular sovereignty was concerned, the Commission had achieved the very best:

*The Commission has declared the Canton of Lucerne a democratic Free State [Article 1 of the draft constitution] in short a people’s state, and by this clear and straightforward statement they have made the people and their sovereignty become a truth; they have recognised the people and its plenitude of justice and power as the first, the highest and the last. Both the state and the church come from God, but both must be founded in the people by spiritual and worldly mediators, and they must be based on the people. The spirit and heart, mind and will, united into one nation, are the most mighty fortress of God and the essential and living foundations of the Church and the State in the world.<sup>31</sup>*

In this respect, the draft constitution an important political step forward in Troxler’s view, not only for the Canton of Lucerne, but for the entire Swiss Confederation. Troxler had now thoroughly modified his concept of representative democracy and supported ideas to make popular sovereignty tangible. He therefore fully

agreed with the Commission that made the following comment on Article 1 of the proposed constitution, “The Canton of Lucerne is a democratic Free State”<sup>32</sup>:

*It is stated that the Free State is not just a democratic-representative, but a democratic one. In democratic states, the highest law is the true will of the people, the public opinion, which only bends to God’s will, to religion and justice. In democratic-representative states, however the will of the people is ceded to its representatives, and only a shadow of actual sovereignty itself is left to the people.<sup>33</sup>*

With regard to popular rights and as a consequence of his own considerations, Troxler was already an advocate of the *Referendum* at that time. Back then, a request for a mandatory voting on all decrees and bills of the cantonal parliament was called a referendum. In 1844 a Constitutional Council, that was also dominated by Catholic conservatives, integrated this popular law into a new cantonal constitution for the first time. This was in the Canton of Valais, and it was then accepted in a popular voting.<sup>34</sup> In the Canton Lucerne, however, the referendum was not yet enforceable in 1841. Troxler also understood this, and that is why he initially supported the Veto as proposed by the Commission in the constitutional text (predecessor of today’s optional referendum). For him, this was however only a temporary solution, and, as he explained with reference to his historical-philosophical approach, “a meagre remainder of the actual primordial order”<sup>35</sup>. But he had hopes that something greater would develop from such a small beginning:

*Our oligarchic and ochlocratic council states had finally completely excluded the people from taking part in public affairs. People’s assemblies and citizens’ associations were considered rebellious, because only the gracious lords and superiors wanted to legislate and rule and judge the common people. Now the tide has turned, like never before. While the veto in democracy is a major and important step forward, it is actually only a negative thing. But even if it is still imperfectly organised itself, through use and practice it will become the positive thing that lies within it. It will gradually revive the original assemblies of the people, and these will not only serve to elect authorities, not merely to adopt or reject laws. The whole future of the people lies in the veto communities.<sup>36</sup>*

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For Troxler, the veto on the law was “the most important new institution”<sup>37</sup> in the proposed constitutional text. Even after the debate in the Constitutional Council, this popular right remained part of the new constitution, which was clearly adopted by referendum in 1841. The canton of Lucerne was thus the third canton after St. Gallen and Baselland to introduce a veto on legislation and to have a lasting influence on further discussions on more direct democracy – not least as a result of Troxler’s interventions.

### Conclusion

With his concept of democracy, Troxler made decisive contributions to the topics of the foundation of the nation state based on *natural and thus human rights*. On this basis, the state is not a machine for the purpose of rule, but an organism that has evolved and still develops further.<sup>38</sup> This concept was incorporated not only in Troxler’s proposals on cantonal constitutional processes, but also on those at the federal level. Ten years before the foundation of the federal state, he wrote a “Draft of a Basic Law for the Swiss Confederation” (1838). What is remarkable is that Troxler anticipated the two-chamber system, among other things.<sup>39</sup>

Troxler saw politics as a practical natural law-discipline, and he stressed the importance of the principle of the public sphere: “The citizen must be able to convince himself that state authority is exercised and applied in accordance with the purpose and constitution of the state.”<sup>40</sup> With his contribution to achieving freedom of the press in the Swiss cantons and the state as a whole, he also promoted the emergence of a critical public sphere that is indispensable for a democratic culture.

*Popular sovereignty* was to him the prime directive, and since the Helvetic Republic he consistently adhered to a concept of popular sovereignty, which he increasingly concretised and which finally made him an advocate of direct democracy:

“It has always been particularly dear to my heart to free the *sovereignty of the people* from the shackles and bonds into which every new rule has forced them, and to finally bring them into their own in spirit and truth in their relations with the *state*, the *confederation* and the *Church*.”<sup>41</sup>

Troxler was one of the first to consistently demand the equal and direct election

of a *Constitutional Council* for constitutional amendments in Swiss cantons. After a certain period of time, the Constitutional Council would have to submit the prepared proposal to the population, and they would be given the opportunity to comment on it. Troxler studied popular wishes in several cantons and repeatedly encountered the demand for more co-determination. This was certainly one reason why he increasingly became an advocate of direct democracy.

According to Troxler, it would be fundamental that the Constitutional Council should then, if at all possible, incorporate the proposals from the population into the constitutional text. Finally, the revised constitutional text must be approved by referendum. Already in his “Philosophical Jurisprudence” he had explained with regard to popular participation:

*The people to whom it is not granted to submit their ideas against laws and decrees or acts made by the regent, and which are adverse to them, are not free, and every state which denies its citizens the means to ask for justice, individually or together, is not a people’s state.*<sup>42</sup>

Troxler emphasised the importance of education and training. For him, education was the supreme constitutional purpose. According to Troxler, the politician, philosopher and doctor always has a (popular) educational mission:

*As a citizen of the community of Lucerne, I finally recognised my right and duty to make clear to the people its position as sovereign over all its constitutions and over all of its legislators, to bring the people to the feeling of its right, and since feeling without deed is only half a life, to guide the people to the possession and exercise of its right.*<sup>43</sup>

Troxler saw the promotion and internalisation of the “feeling” of one’s own (human) rights, and thus also the prerequisite for demanding, defending and expanding these rights, as one of the most important tasks.

<sup>1</sup> www.fidd.ch

<sup>2</sup> Roca, René. Bernhard Meyer und der liberale Katholizismus der Sonderbundszeit. Religion und Politik in Luzern (1830–1848). Bern 2002, S. 32f

<sup>3</sup> Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital. “Was verloren ist, was zu gewinnen“. Address to the Helvetic society, in: Rohr, Adolf (Hg.). Troxler (1780–1866). Second volume, S. 39–67, p. 45

<sup>4</sup> p. 43f

<sup>5</sup> p. 45

<sup>6</sup> p. 47, 60

<sup>7</sup> p. 517 p., 51

<sup>8</sup> p. 52

<sup>9</sup> ebd.

<sup>10</sup> p. 55

<sup>11</sup> p. 57

<sup>12</sup> p. 60

<sup>13</sup> p. 49

<sup>14</sup> p. 63

<sup>15</sup> ebd.

<sup>16</sup> Roca, René. Wenn die Volkssouveränität wirklich eine Wahrheit werden soll ... Die schweizerische direkte Demokratie in Theorie und Praxis – Das Beispiel des Kantons Luzern, Zürich/Basel/Genève 2012, p. 94

<sup>17</sup> Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital. *Ehrrerbietige Vorstellungsschrift an den Grossen Rath des Kantons Luzern. Eingereicht durch achtzehn Abgeordnete des Volks am 22. November 1830*, in: Rohr, Adolf. Troxler. Zweiter Band, S. 177–187, p. 182

<sup>18</sup> ebd.

<sup>19</sup> p. 181

<sup>20</sup> p. 180

<sup>21</sup> Roca, René. *Bernhard Meyer und der liberale Katholizismus der Sonderbundszeit. Religion und Politik in Luzern (1830–1848)*. Bern 2002, p. 81–86

<sup>22</sup> Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital. *Bemerkungen über den Entwurf des Grundgesetzes für den eidgenössischen Stand Luzern von dem Ausschuss des Verfassungs-raths im Jahre 1841*, in: Rohr, Troxler. Zweiter Band, p. 477–496, hier p. 485

<sup>23</sup> Troxler, *Rechtslehre*. p. 218f. Troxler’s view that men and women are equal and equitable would deserve a more in-depth investigation. He leaves behind rational natural law as well as the liberal rational law of Kant: “In marriage, as little as in nature, there is a reason for the supremacy or subordination of one spouse above or below the other.”

<sup>24</sup> Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital. *Volkssouveränität die ächte und die falsche oder Luzerner! Was ist revolutionär?*, in: Rohr, Adolf (Hg.). Ignaz Paul Vital Troxler (1780–1866). *Politische Schriften in Auswahl. Zweiter Band*, Bern 1989, p. 502–516, hier p. 506, 510

<sup>25</sup> Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital. *Ein wahres Wort über das jetzige Vaterland, mit Rücksicht auf eine Schmäh-schrift namenloser Verläumder, 1839*, in: Rohr, Troxler. Zweiter Band, p. 449–476, here p. 468

<sup>26</sup> Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital. *Bemerkungen über den Entwurf des Grundgesetzes für den eidgenössischen Stand Luzern von dem Ausschuss des Verfassungs-raths im Jahre 1841*, in: Rohr, Troxler. Zweiter Band, p. 477–496, hier p. 479

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 480

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 482

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 481

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p. 482

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, p. 484f

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, p. 485

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, p. 485f

<sup>34</sup> Roca, René. (Hg.). *Katholizismus und moderne Schweiz. Beiträge zur Erforschung der Demokratie. Band 1*, Basel 2016, p. 81–94, here p. 27f

<sup>35</sup> Troxler. *Bemerkungen*, p. 490

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Gschwend, Lukas. *Kommentierende Einleitung*, in: Troxler, Ignaz Paul Vital. *Philosophische Rechtslehre der Natur und des Gesetzes, mit Rücksicht auf die Irrlehren der Liberalität und Legitimität*, Würzburg 2006, p. 11–56, hier p. 36

<sup>39</sup> Graber, Rolf. *Wege zur direkten Demokratie in der Schweiz. Eine kommentierte Quellenauswahl von der Frühzeit bis 1874*, Wien 2013, p. 410–417

<sup>40</sup> Troxler. *Rechtslehre*, p. 166

<sup>41</sup> Troxler. *Volkssouveränität*, p. 504

<sup>42</sup> Troxler. *Rechtslehre*, p. 166

<sup>43</sup> Troxler. *Volkssouveränität*, p. 506

## Nursing – an eternal profession

by Moritz Nestor

In Switzerland the professional nurse was renamed “Pflegefachfrau” (“care specialist”) from the original term “Krankenschwester” (sister of sick persons). Why was this done? So that the profession might be upgraded or become “more professional”?

Recently a colleague told me that when he was in hospital, a young pretty woman came up to his bed with the greeting: “Hello! I’m Ms X, I’m a care specialist; I’m your caregiver.” For a millisecond, it had occurred to him to send her out of the room, but he knew it wasn’t her fault and he had left it at that. She did not ask, “How are you?” but immediately started to take down his medical history as a patient. The Bosnian cleaning lady always happily asked how he was feeling before she wiped the floor in the morning. After that, the room always felt warmer.

The medical doctor *Viktor von Weizsäcker* once described the nature of the physician’s profession as follows: “When the little sister sees her little brother in pain, she will find a way above all knowledge: Caresingly, her *hand* will find its way, she will want to fondle and *touch* him where it hurts. So the little sister becomes the first doctor. A prior knowledge of a primal effect unconsciously rules within her: it guides her urge to her hand and leads her hand to the effective touch. Because this is what her little brother will learn: This hand does him good. The sensation of being touched by his sister’s hand comes between him and his pain, and the pain retreats before this new sensation. And so the first idea of what a doctor is and the first technique of therapy are born. Actually, the being a doctor is very much centered in the small hand here ... even if the hand gets bigger and arms itself with instruments and lends its power to medicative poisons or to the talking mouth, it will always remain, equally deft in feeling and holding, in nestling and cooling, a *living instrument* also of later medical activity... The medical act consists ... in a touching of two people; ... beholding pain one cannot remain motionless, one must either turn towards it or turn away from it. This is actually the *purpose* of the career choice of becoming a medical doctor; that one turns towards the pain.” And I would like to add: That applies to all humans.

There are professions that come and go like fashions do. The profession of a doctor, according to Viktor von Weizsäcker, is “a perpetual one”, “because it is an eternal destiny, that we become ill and need help ... but medicine does not come and go like a people, a culture”. The profession of the doctor, and that applies equally to that of the nurse, is not one to change with changing fashions. Because we hu-



*“The ‘sister’ was the honorary title for the human dimension of nursing. Everyone can empty chamber pots and bring food, but care is more. Care is not a technique, cannot be programmed or calculated.” (picture keystone)*

mans are living beings, and our life is so fragile. We will always be ill – however, good the techniques and applications of medicine may become.

But the most important thing is: The “sister” was the honorary title for the human dimension of nursing. Everyone can empty chamber pots and bring food, but care is more. Care is not a technique, cannot be programmed or calculated. In all advanced cultures it was part of the dignity of woman that she can give life. And it was as part of that dignity that women became nurses, sisters of the sick. Why did women begin to save and care for the sick and wounded in the men-led wars at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? The fact that women, as sisters, did not serve war, but life, was the human light shining on the faces of the suffering men and giving them a gleam of hope: that after all, there exists something else besides killing.

In 1943, my father lay severely wounded in the reserve military hospital of Görnitz for more than half a year, until his head shot wound and his frostbite had healed. In the only preserved photograph from that time, next to his parents and his fiancée there is also sister Hilde standing at the head of the hospital bed. How my father found her after the cursed end of the accursed war, I do not know. But as long as Sister Hilde lived, she came to visit our family regularly, last with snow-white hair and a crooked back, and Father held his relationship with her in high honour. At other times rather irascible, he was another man in her presence. He affectionately

called her, “Sister Hilde,” and she asked him “How are you, Nestor” drily but with warmth. When she died at the age of eighty, she left us a black stick with a silver handle on which she had leant while walking during the last few years and which Father kept as an honoured memento. She had been a sister to him at the hardest time of his life. Few men survived a head shot at that time.

In the book by *Gertrud Schwing* “A Way to the Soul of the Mentally Ill”<sup>1</sup>, there is the moving example of a thirty-year-old psychiatric patient who has been catatonic for months and is artificially fed. “For a few days, I sit quietly next to the bed for half an hour always at the same time. For three or four days everything is quiet in the cell. But then the coverlet rises a very little. Two dark eyes look around warily. There is fear and a deep pain in them. Slowly the whole face appears. It is empty, dead, like a mask. I stay passive and, as a result, she straightens up and starts watching me. And the next day her mouth opens, which has been silent for so long. ‘Are you my sister?’, she asks. And after my ‘No’, she continues: ‘But you came to visit me every day, today, yesterday and the day before yesterday.’”

This example should give us food for thought. Why did the patient ask if nurse Gertrud Schwing was her sister? Should not we make up for our stupidity and call our nurses sister again? •

<sup>1</sup> Schwing, Gertrud. *Ein Weg zur Seele des Geisteskranken*. Zurich 1940. English: *A Way to the Soul of the Mentally Ill*. New York 1954. With a foreword by Frieda Fromm-Reichmann.

# Even in medicine it depends on the concept of man

## An important book: "Allergien und Phobien, ein Tsunami der Zivilisation"

by Dr med. Thomas Lippmann

*Hans-Jürgen Schramm, doctor of psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapist in the Neustädter Land near Hannover fears a relapse into medieval conditions. Bygone epidemic plagues threaten to break out again. Responsible for this are a physical, mental and emotional exploitation of man as well as the current political distortion of the term sustainability. Schramm warns against the breeding of "cyborgs" and reminds of an urgently necessary reversion to the respect for human life and makes the case for more personal responsibility.*

His book entails a momentous scientific discovery. We all could be affected. Considering the threateningly rising number of mentally ill and allergy sufferers there is the danger of an entire exhaustion of immunologic capacities. The book presents the hypothesis of a dual danger for mankind, a relation of allergy and phobia (a form of anxiety). This theoretical part provides a lot of food for thought, always with the aim to integrate – regarding somatic diseases – immaterial, up to now unknown, especially emotional influences – in the proper sense of psychosomatic.

The author draws on a big fundus of psychological, experience-based knowledge. He so dedicates this book to "the countless people who seeked medical aid from me as patients throughout many decades. They all became my teachers, too,

whom I owe to a special degree fulfilment and success of my medical work".

In the book an abundance of precious worldly wisdoms is to be found which serve the prevention of physical and mental sufferings. Regrettably this is not possible without the analysis of numerous dangers for the people of today the author undertakes which appears gloomy indeed: in the material world as well as and especially for their soul. But the heaviness of the analysis is confronted with the prospect that the author always pursues the concern to "pass on beneficent to future generations what is good, acquired from teachers and by own struggle for insight on occasion of personal situations of suffering, in a ripening process of experience".

For Hans-Jürgen Schramm spiritual balance is central for health. But he also emphasises: We ourselves are responsible to achieve spiritual balance. The author quotes the bible: "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" Needless to say that everybody has to do this in his specific, individual way, for himself but also considering the claims of the community, of life, taking into account our nature respectively the principles valid for all creatures: modest rather than boundless. If I as member of a community want to accomplish something or to achieve something personally, it is my duty to consider the consequences for others and the surrounding world. Therefore a comprehensive education is necessary, and therefore the book of Dr Schramm provides an abundance of hints and suggestions both concerning material and emotional factors of influence.

Here only two of the many factors of influence addressed in the book shall be mentioned: the downplaying of drug abuse and the less known influence of the use of nano-particles in food industry. Repeatedly Schramm points out that close connection between body and soul in *psycho-neuro-immunology* frequently discussed in the 70s of the last century today is neglected in medicine. Only the body and unfixed of it a maybe immaterial soul is observed. But if we do not take responsibility for ourselves and the creation again, our immune system, which Schramm sees as psychosomatic entity, may be exhausted. This would be followed by an increase of allergies and mental illnesses especially of anxieties and phobias.

In a comprehensible form Hans-Jürgen Schramm passes on his philosophical knowledge and his insights to the reader. Besides general characteristics common to all creatures in this book he takes the importance of the soul centre stage of his

considerations. Already as a young doctor a professor had drawn his attention to the importance of the soul. Last but not least, it was the integrity of Dr Schramm, who already memorised the old principle as a young doctor: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. For him as a doctor this meant: As a doctor, prescribe only therapies you would apply to yourself or apply to yourself.

Remarkable is his reference to the discrepancy between the so called academics who admit only a minor significance to the anima, and the general public. It's about the question what is most important for the well-being, what is most important for life. It is about emotional matters and thereby the great importance of the family is in the first place.

So one would like to warmly recommend this compact opus of Hans-Jürgen Schramm, which is propitiating with nature and man and provoking one's own thoughts, to many, but first of all to doctors-to-be. •

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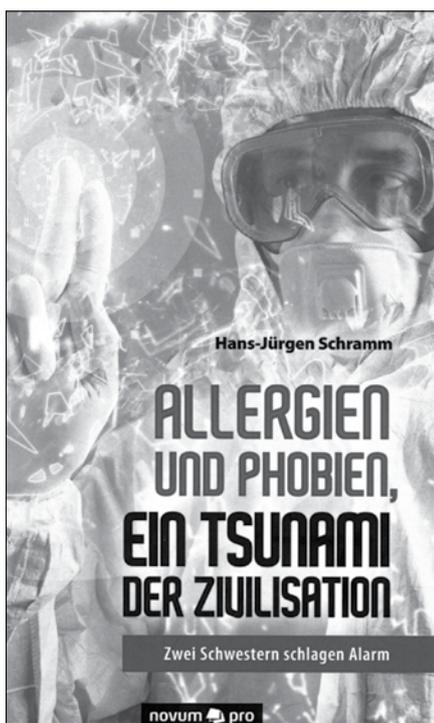
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