

Current Concerns

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World debt cut – also possible without loss of societal prosperity

For a re-structuring of the world financial architecture

by Prof Dr Heinrich Wohlmeyer, Austria



Prof Dr Heinrich
Wohlmeyer (picture uk)

Negotiations on a free trade agreement between the EU and the US were released by the European Commission and the EU Council of Ministers. That step is apparently backed by Austria, as the decisions were taken unanimously, no

concerns or objections on the part of Austria are known and no conditions were set. Justifying a start of negotiations without any preconditions, one refers to studies financed by the *Bertelsmann Foundation* promising the creation of some hundred thousand jobs the logic and importance of which, however, are hard to understand.

This situation should give rise to more fundamental considerations. The first step

“US Senator Ron Paul has put up the calculation for his fellow citizens showing that the state would be without debts and that all citizens would have had to pay no income tax since 1913 (installation of the Fed as a cartel of big banks with the National Banking privileges) if the monetary expansion due to the corresponding economic growth would have been available to the common public instead of to the banks.”

towards whatever contract is to thoroughly look at your partner – in particular at his constitution and interests. The next step to follow is considering the advantages and disadvantages of closer institutional connections.

American debt crisis

As to the general conditions of the United States: The US is currently both at the height of its military power and at the height of an almost no longer affordable debt crisis. The federal debt is already 17 trillion US dollars (that is a million times

17 million!). For every dollar of government spending 49 cents must be borrowed anew. The total debt is already at 60 trillion. Since the situation has been revealed and brought to mind to the whole world by the bickering over the debt capping, the world is already massively reacting. Many banks and funds have divested short-term US government bonds, and the Asian and South American countries are about to establish nationally interconnected banks and currency funds.

continued on page 2

The rapprochement between USA and Iran: the development of a new geopolitical situation?

by Prof Dr Albert A. Stahel, Institute for Strategic Studies, Wädenswil

Some weeks ago, shortly before the Iranian president's flight back to Teheran, a phone call between *Rouhani* and *Obama* took place. Nearly simultaneously a meeting between the American and the Iranian foreign minister took place, as well. For the first time since the occupation of the US embassy in Teheran in 1979, a direct meeting of both states took place. Although the meeting and also the telephone call can only be a first step towards normalization of the relations between USA and Iran, a new geopolitical situation in Mideast could arise.

At present this rapprochement is a necessity and worthwhile for both states. While the Iranian economy suffers from the sanctions, the USA wants to reduce their presence in Mideast for two reasons. First they want to increase their allies' support in controlling China with

their instruments of power and their naval power and thereby hold their new rival at bay. Secondly, for reasons of their economic and financial weakness, they need to reduce the distension of their power instruments. The USA can no longer afford being present in two regions at the same time. The rapprochement between USA and Iran therefore happens at the right time and has also recently been promoted by the Obama administration. It seems likely that also the Ayatollahs in Teheran will support *Rouhani's* contacts. If the leader of the revolution *Khamenei* publicly sounds a cautionary note about an overhasty rapprochement towards USA, this is to be interpreted as soothing the conservatives in Teheran. It's a certainty that *Rouhani* has coordinated his activities with *Khamenei*.

What consequences and effects could a rapprochement between Iran and USA have? In the first instance the USA will have to reduce the sanctions and the embargo towards the Iranian national economy. step by step. This reduction might also incorporate the initiation of direct diplomatic relations. Mid-term Teheran will have to subdue their nuclear program to the close control of the *International En-*



Albert Stahel
(picture thk)

continued on page 2

"World debt cut ..."
continued from page 1

Crumbling of the world reserve currency function of the dollar

The latter means that even the protection of the world's key currency function of the US dollar by the *International Monetary Fund* (IMF) and the *World Bank Group* (WB), where the US rule over the blocking minority, are on the verge of crumbling away. In addition, large economies such as China and Japan have agreed to settle their trade not in US dollars, but in their national currencies. US Treasury Secretary, Jack Lew, therefore warned at the fall meeting of the IMF and the WB, "We cannot take for granted the reputation as a safe haven of the financial world." The investment advisor *Wealth Daily* expresses the same thing more drastically: "With the loss of the position as the world's reserve currency, the US lose the ability to print money at will, and thus to finance their deficits at the expense of the rest of the world." In other words, the military supremacy of the United States is hardly any more affordable in the future. Therefore, panic reactions and indirect recoveries are likely to happen.

Eliminating competition – attempt at rescuing the living on credit

The latter include the drying up of competing financial centres through media-supported extortion – as the example of Switzerland shows; the blowing up of the offshore competition in Cyprus that could only be carried out by using CIA data – as every insider knew – and whose comprehensive collection has been revealed to us in the meantime; the stigmatisation of all other offshore financial ports except their own (for example, Delaware) and those of the "junior partner" (British crown colonies); the high standards by the Basel Committee on Banking stability of the *Bank for International Settlements*, which are characteristically not observed in the

US and especially burden the small European banks with costs that make their business unprofitable (large-scale regional bank mergers in favour of controllable big banks); the disclosure of financial information in Europe without reciprocity, etc. All this is aimed at the return of financial assets (repatriation), through which the US dollar is still given a financial respite. However, this can only be successful in the short term. The trade balance has structurally been in deficit since 1980, the current account since the nineties. However, the current reserve currency position still allows the so far largest economy a life on credit. But it has become a "nail-biter". The Chinese news agency *Xinhua* comments: "It may be a good point in time to consider building a de-Americanised world."

War, world fraud or world debt cut?

In the social field, tensions are increasing. The gap between rich and poor is opening even wider. Already a tenth of the population needs food stamps in order to survive. The US high finance, which has been equipped with National Bank privileges since 1913 and has, in addition, protected itself financially by the international financial architecture after the Second World War, still dominates the political and economic events and leaves a trail of a no longer continuable shifting of income towards capital income at the expense of the common good. A sober assessment of the US offers only three ways out of their precarious situation: a (third) world war, which – as in the past – legitimises the further exploitation of the world, or a "world fraud" by a massive devaluation of the dollar (defraudation by a factor 10?), or a new world currency agreement which, above all, would have to be accompanied by an orderly debt waiver of US high finance. Why the latter is reasonable and doable, I have described in detail in my book "Empörung in Europa – Wege aus der Krise" ("Outrage in Europe

– Ways out of the crisis", see also below Conclusion II).

US-EU Free Trade Agreement – a deadly embrace?

Conclusion I: The US offer to conclude a free trade agreement with the EU, is the embrace of a drowning man. Usually, this is fatal for both parties if the one endangered by the embracer (the savior) has no rescue strategy and the one to be saved does not accept this in cooperative fashion. This pre-conditions will be discussed briefly later on.

But first, a brief outline of interests:

As the rest of the world is increasingly cutting off the US financial rule (see above), Europe is the only wealthy and compliant place which still can be skimmed by the insatiable. By channeling lobbyist into governments and the financial sectors and by the gradual establishment of a de facto financial dictatorship through this personnel (see management of the ECB, ESM and the planned Bank-Union) those interests are implemented. If this trend continues, it will be the end of the European social model (social contract). How far we are already down that road is shown in a recent study by the *International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies* (IFRC). In 52 European countries included in the survey there are 43 million people who can no longer afford their food and 120 million are at risk of poverty.

The United States of America, or Wall Street to be more precise, has invested heavily in the military complex since the First World War. The US is the largest weapons exporter in the world – followed by Russia – and needs customers. Therefore, "conflict settlement" by war and the commitment of Europe to upgrade their weapons and assistance capability under US command (*NATO*) is part of their foreign policy. A partner who is structurally

continued on page 3

"The rapprochement ..."
continued from page 1

ergy Agency. By way of reciprocation the USA will accept the civil use of nuclear energy by Iran. In the long-term the USA will also accept the Iranian dominance in the Persian Gulf just because of the reduction of their engagement in the Mideast. This means that the United States will respect the new geopolitical sphere of influence of Teheran, that has developed due to the misconceived intervention of the *Bush-*

administration in Iraq. After the withdrawal of the USA from Afghanistan in 2014, this sphere of influence could be extended from Afghanistan to including Libanon. The partnership with Iran would also be a welcome possibility of control and suppression of the Sunni Salafists in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria. In Syria the Iranians will in return have to consent to the replacement of *Assad* by another Alawite.

The real victim of this geopolitical reorientation will be Saudi Arabia. The future of the kingdom, that until today has very actively supported the Sunni extremists world-

wide, could be questioned. Regarding Israel, the USA will further on guarantee the safety of the Jewish state, though without being willing to submit to the temper of the respective government in Jerusalem. The times when the USA was in geopolitical captivity of Israel in Mideast, might be over.

The first steps of the Obama-Administration in rapprochement towards Iran are to be applauded. They were urgently necessary. The Persians are the natural ally of the USA in the region, due to the geostrategic location of Iran.

(Translation Current Concerns)

"World debt cut ..."
continued from page 2

depending on war, must be seen as a burden and threat, rather than an advantage.

Another important sector is agriculture. The pre-predecessor of the current US Agriculture Secretary came straight to the point: "Agriculture is the largest foreign exchange earner. Europe is our future market. We can produce everything cheaper. If the rich Europeans want to afford their unprofitable farming, then they should keep themselves well-paid landscapers. We supply the food." In a free trade zone, this is going to happen. The long-term European food sovereignty, the supply in case of supply chain disruptions, and last but not least our agricultural sector that has developed over centenaries would be relinquished.

In a free trade zone, the different social, environmental and legal (e.g. accounting rules, types of evidence, prudence in the use of genetically modified organisms) standards would be adjusted to those of the United States to not lose competitiveness.

Clearly, the disadvantages of an agreement without preconditions are therefore greater than its benefits.

**Reasonable prospects would offer
the liberation from the clutches
of the financial world**

So what should be done to ensure that Europe could enter into negotiations with good conscience and a good future prospectus for both parties?

The first and most important measure would be that the US agree to a liberation "from the clutches of the financial world"¹ and agree to a new financial world architecture. This can be facilitated by way of converting the *FED* in a true national bank – oriented towards the common good – by a partial debt waiver of large investors, by returning the privilege to create money back to the state, and by a new world currency agreement along the lines

of the proposal for an *International Currency Union* (ICU) from 1944 – which at that time was rejected by the US.

As big investors (financial oligarchs) are already creating debts out of nothing (*fiat money*), it is possible to restructure and partially write-off these debts without social welfare loss (implosion of the bubble). US Senator Ron Paul has put up the calculation for his fellow citizens showing that the state would be without debts and that all citizens would have had to pay no income tax since 1913 (installation of the Fed as a cartel of big banks with the National Banking privileges) if the monetary expansion due to the corresponding economic growth would have been available to the common public instead of to the banks.

Furthermore, an agreement for a – so far unsuccessful – international capital revenue tax to finance expenditures in the public interest and a harmonized taxation of assets is to be demanded.

The US could be recapitalized and again become a respected partner in world politics and economy, without having to plunder the world and the need to promote wars. The above proposals are therefore of mutual interest.

In world trade, the principles of the destination countries and the purchasing power parity should be especially recognized. Free market access may only be granted if the environmental and social standards of the destination country are met and if the purchasing power parity is reflected by exchange rates. These are prerequisites for a cross border exchange of goods and services that leads to more welfare.

Conclusion II: The US needs Europe's support if they wish to exit the no longer sustainable role of a self-appointed world policeman and world financier and to play the role of a respected, strong and exemplary democratic world power. Among friends, one should express this openly and negotiate accordingly. Time is ripe and the situation is favorable. The reorganization, which ultimately may lead to

an EU-US free trade zone should not be done after the above-quoted cynical statement of the Chinese, which means the abdication of the United States, but in a partner-like fashion. The future Austrian Federal Government is called upon to pursue this concept, to seek European allies and to bring the proposals to the negotiating table, if necessary with the threat of a veto.

¹ I'm using the diction of *J. G. Speth* from his book *Der Wandel ist machbar. Manifest für ein neues Amerika* (America the Possible. Manifesto for a New Economy), published by Oekom, Munich 2013.

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A good economic system promotes peace and is the citizens' affair

The insane capitalism and the insane competition in Europe must be overcome

by Karl Müller

It is high time to remember the foundations that the whole of Europe can build on. Due to the dominance of globalization and based on the false theory that there was something like an "invisible hand" of unfettered markets and international division of labor that were good for everyone, together with the specific changes in European societies towards economist market societies in which everything that people need and wish for their lives and their well-being should be left to the market forces – due to all this we have forgotten that freedom, including economic freedom, requires law and order and that the foundation of all this must be the citizens' will oriented towards the common good.

The social market economy was deprived of its substance

After the Second World War, social market economy became the recognized model of good economic order in almost every European country that did not belong to the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. Everyone knew that unbridled capitalism and the concomitant attack on the citizenship of the citizens had greatly contributed to the rise of totalitarianism and the World War.

With the end of the East-European block and with the attempt to introduce sheer capitalism, almost all successful social market economies of Western Europe were gradually eroded. They were deprived of their substance, which builds on the dignity of the human person, which considers entrepreneurs and workers equally important partners in the working world. This substance, which also includes the idea that all economic activity has to serve the public interest, was largely reduced to government cash benefits for the (alleged) needy and a growing double-edged social bureaucracy.

From then on, the power structure of the European Union and its bureaucracy in particular served the purpose of implementing sheer capitalism in all EU countries. The European Union played a pioneer role in introducing the free capital flow and thus the kind of capitalism which we have today and which is completely insane.

In the course of this development Europe radically changed, although it had never wanted to wage another war after the Second World War and had aimed at more justice, decent work for all and the safeguard of livelihood. Even those in Western

Europe who, full of idealism, were striving for a united Europe and therefore supported the way towards the EU, but did not share the plan for a centralized and bureaucratic Europe à la *Monnet* in the interests of big capital, see themselves sorely deceived today. Many wanted a peaceful, co-operating "Europe of nations" as envisaged by the French President *Charles de Gaulle*. However, nothing has been left of these ideas in the really existing EU.

From the "board of the mighty" to a German leading power?

In an interview of 2009 the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, *Jean Asselborn*, said, that within the European Union the states were no longer equal. Rather a "board of the mighty and their vassals" were setting the tone. The chairman of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group in the German Bundestag, *Volker Kauder*, addressed the CDU's party conference in 2011 with as follows: "Now Europe is speaking German."

These are just two of many signals that the emphasis within the EU has shifted. The chimera of a union of equal states is now rarely publicly discussed. Instead, Germany has risen to European leadership power.

No later than the Greek sovereign debt crisis in 2010 became apparent, the facade of the "peace project" EU is showing cracks. The tones between the states of the EU became sharper, old prejudices are again nurtured. Therefore the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU in 2012 seemed a real grotesque.

The euro, supported by *Helmut Kohl* to enforce such a political union within the EU, has deeply split EU-Europe up. The current economic supremacy of Germany threatens to develop into a political hegemony in favor of very specific political and economic interests.

Striving for hegemony in Europe through economic power

Joachim Starbatty portrayed the catastrophic situation in countries such as Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain, being dependent on the ESM or other bailout measures – not least *due to* the so-called "rescue policy" –, in his new book "Tatort Euro. Bürger, schützt das Recht, die Demokratie und euer Vermögen" (Crime scene euro. Citizens, protect the

Poverty in Europe

km. After the first report on poverty in Europe published in October 2009 (see *Zeit-Fragen* no. 6 from 7.2.2011), had already displayed alarming figures about the extent of poverty, the result of the second study published by the *International Federation of the Societies of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent* on 10 October 2013 ("Humanitarian impacts of the economic crisis in Europe", www.ifrc.org/PageFiles/134339/1260300-Economic%20crisis%20Report_EN_LR.pdf) is even worse.

"Five years later: from bad to worse", is the headline of the summary containing the main results of the study, which consists of 60 pages. This study interpreted official statistics and observations done by the national Societies of the *Red Cross* and the *Red Crescent* in 52 states of the European zone. Everybody is recommended to read the study in full length. Here we can only remind you of some few results:

The number of persons who are depending on the food aid offered by the *Red Cross* or *Red Crescent* has increased from 2 million to 3.5 million. There are 43 million of people in the countries in-

cluded in the study who have not a sufficient income to pay the food they need. 120 million people live under the poverty level that is at 60% of average income in a country. In states as *Bulgary*, *Romania* and *Latvia* this figure includes more than 40% of the population. In *Lithuania* and *Croatia* it is more than 30% of the population who must live on an income below the poverty threshold. But it is also in most other countries that the rate of people who are living on the breadline is rising. The persevering high and even increasing unemployment figures are a matter of worry, especially the number of unemployed young people. In numerous countries the unemployment among youths is even higher than 20%, and in the countries that the study is about, it is more than 30%, and it even ranges up to 60%.

The gap between rich and poor is widening in almost all countries and the number of "new poor" – these are people who work, but cannot make a living out from their work – is rising as before. At the same time the number of people having a middle-size income is decreasing.

"A good economic system furthers ..."

continued from page 4

law, democracy and your assets – 2013, ISBN 978-3-944305-03-5).

The economic successes of the companies in one country are no longer for the benefit of all the others. For example: The persistently high German export surpluses are associated with increased indebtedness of the importing countries. The horrendous debts cannot be repaid by these countries. Instead, they get deeper and deeper into debt bondage, i.e. in dependence from their credit grantors, in ever new rescheduling of their debts and the applicable interest rate. And in the case of complete insolvency the German taxpayers will have to pay for this debt – which is particularly grotesque.

While many countries of the European Union suffer from horrendous unemployment rates, especially among young people, and will no longer be able to work themselves out of recession and depression, German companies and the German policy headhunt for highly skilled young professionals who have been well-trained in their home countries, before. A teacher at the German School in Rome reported that more and more young Italians attend the German school – to learn German and then be able to emigrate to Germany. At the same time the reservations against German policy are increasing day by day. Similar reports come from Spain, Portugal and Greece. Tens of thousands of young, well-trained professionals have left these countries in recent years and immigrated to Germany. Is that the "solution" of the German "demographic problem"? Young people searching for work will now be able to turn their back more easily on the new EU-country Croatia – where more than 50 percent of young people under 25 years are out of work.

The "new" capitalism

At the same time a kind of capitalism prevails in the so-called crisis states, which follows entirely the ideology of globalization. One example is Greece. While the population is increasingly suffering in its fourth year in a row, local young entrepreneurs praise the new economic order oriented entirely towards globalization.

The "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" gave some of these young Greek entrepreneurs the chance to speak in detail on 18 September 2013, and the pages were appropriately enough titled "The Greek utopia". The newspaper's editors were

full of praise for the new form of Greek capitalism and talk about their article as a "response to the Greece-bashing with the help of young Greeks' reason". The young Greeks were trying in their country to do the same thing "the postwar Germans did in their country".

Reading those four newspaper pages you can see the outlines of a new economic system that no longer focuses on the demand for goods and services in Greece, i.e. in the country itself, but concentrates on the demand of the rich in this world: posh tourism, fine agricultural specialty products and technologies for the world's rich. "From day one on, we were aiming at a global market", says one of the young entrepreneurs. The young businessmen talk of a necessary "change in mentality", whose path has been smoothed by the "crisis" in their country: much less state, highest recognition for the pursuit of maximum profit, privatization of economic life, opening up for investors from around the world, everything more cosmopolitan ... A young businessman put it that way, "The capitalist world is at an impasse. We need a new model. I think the new model will emerge from the companies. The companies are the molecules of modern society."

Is the "new" Greece a model for Europe?

The German newspaper editors comment: "The politicians have failed to tell the Germans that not only Greece but all of Europe will restructure itself. Then Greece would not be the last, as we consider it now, but the first country. It could be a role model."

In fact, the result of the German Bundestag elections makes you think. Obviously, the German Chancellor and the parties, which are so well represented in the mass media, succeeded in distracting from the issues of the future, and this way keep political power in their hands. It remains completely open how the newly elected parliament and the new government plan to tackle the upcoming political tasks.

The demand for more direct democracy and the sovereignty of the citizens were no issue in the German parties' election campaigns. Apparently, none of the "Bundestag" parties expected to enlarge their electorate by making a law about the crucial political right of citizens, namely the right to exercise legislative power in important issues. Instead, the polemic against direct democracy in Germany is on the increase again, most recently with a full-page article in the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" of

30 September. Successful referenda like the one of 22 September in Hamburg for a return of the power supply networks into the hands of local authorities (see article above) do not seem to fit into the concept of the established political power elites. Instead, "leadership" is required.

Is peace in Europe at risk?

Very likely the heads of those parties in the German Bundestag that will possibly constitute the new government are on a political way towards even greater executive governance. There is a risk that the upcoming policy decisions in Germany will indeed be supported by a large coalition in parliament, but they are not very likely to be decisions in favor of the citizen, and certainly not decided by the citizens themselves.

The question of the future of the German economy and the German economic system will play a central role in the coming years. Do they plan a post-democratic economist totalitarianism, in which the German economy continues to expand its supremacy over the other countries in Europe? Must German policy therefore strive for more "responsibility" in the world, as the German Federal President *Joachim Gauck* demanded on 3 October 2013? Does German policy, the German military have to pay tribute in Africa and the Middle East for the ally in Washington who wants to relocate its political and military action priorities in the Pacific? Tribute payments to allow Germany the *carte blanche* in Europe? And what would all this mean for Europe as a whole? How will the other European states and peoples react?

The economic order is the citizens' affair

Next year marks the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War. Historical retrospect will be on the increase. However, there are also serious voices that point to parallels to the current situation in Europe and in the world. Is this all just a pipe dream? Is the war forever banished from Europe? Or can the "new" capitalism and the insane competition drive Europe into another war?

The economic system is an affair of the citizens, a matter of the peoples. The issue of the economic system is not just a matter of providing citizens with the necessary goods and services. It is also a matter of realizing more justice and a matter of peace, both within the countries in Europe and in the world. •

Citizens succeed in getting the energy-grids back into communal ownership

Hamburg's citizens succeed despite massive counter propaganda

by Burga Buddensiek, Hamburg

Simultaneously with the German parliamentary elections, a further referendum was taking place in Hamburg. This time it was about taking the energy grids back into communal ownership. The referendum was a close run: 50.9% of the votes (i.e. a majority of 15,244 votes) pleaded that the town authorities should buy back the electricity, gas and district heating networks at the rate of 100 per cent). However, it comes close to a miracle that a majority voted in favor of the initiative.

The initiative supported by an alliance of BUND (*Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland*), the *Consumer Advice Centre Hamburg* and parts of the Church started to work towards the implementation of the referendum in 2010, when Hamburg was governed by a coalition of CDU and the Green parties. It could successfully conclude the referendum in June 2011.

In the meantime the Government had changed. (After the successful referendum against the school-reform the coalition of the CDU and the Greens was broken up, so that elections were ahead again, in February 2011. Since then the SPD is in power holding an absolute majority in Parliament under Mayor *Olaf Scholz*.) The new mayor wasn't impressed by the success of the referendum; he declared his opposition to the goals of the initiative and refused any kind of negotiation. Instead, he advocated its own plan: the Senate would buy back 25.1% of the networks, in order to be able to hold a blocking minority. That would not so much burden the budget and secure sufficient influence with regard to the "Energiewende", as he said. Despite the in-between announced referendum in November 2011, the Government created facts: 25.1% of the shares of the networks were bought back at a price of 543.5 Million euro. Although it was agreed that the contracts could be "reversed" in case of a contrary referendum result, Olaf Scholz didn't really took this version into consideration based on the tailwinds of his brilliant election results.

Immediately after the implementation of the "Transparency Act" (October 2012), which the association "*Mehr Demokratie e.V.*" (*More Democracy*) had successfully contended, the "Network Initiative" demanded insight into the calculations that led to the price of the partial re-purchase. (Already at that time the Senate initiated a counter campaign with the argument that a complete re-purchase at the cost of more

than "2 billion euro" would burden the already heavily indebted budget too much. Hamburg couldn't afford this!) This negative decision came from the Fiscal Authority at the end of July 2013. *E.on* and *Vattenfall* had vehemently refused to publish the evaluation bases and other previously inaccessible attachments to the treaties. The companies' interest in secrecy was assessed "significantly" higher than the information interests of the initiative and population, so the reasoning. The Hamburg Administrative Court also followed this reasoning a few days before the referendum, whereas the initiators had tried to force the publication of files through an interim court order. (The initiative is considering further steps against this decision).

Vattenfall refused not only the unconditional disclosure of the evaluation basis for the networks, but also opposed the publication of profit figures concerning the network operation, in particular the district heating network, which the group is able to operate unrivalled and with no price limits by the Federal Network Agency until today. Thus, the energy supplier company deliberately prevented a factual discussion of actual cost and the affordability of the buy-back. The political parties in the Hamburg city parliament, SPD, CDU and FDP could reduce their "no campaign" on the simple slogan "2 billion to buy the networks. Not with my money. NO to the referendum".

Six weeks prior to the referendum the political "No fraction" obtained further support through a well-funded alliance from economy circles: The *Chamber of Commerce* and the *Industry Association* in Hamburg belonged to this alliance as well as the *Handwerkskammer* (Small Business Association), the *Association of Taxpayers*, the *Landowners Association*, the *Union of Workers in Mining, Chemistry and Energy*, the *Association of Metal- and Electrical Industry*, the *Union of Business Associations* in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein and others. In an unprecedented campaign this "No Alliance" advertised a "no to the power purchase" and spread posters, flyers and newspaper ads over the entire city.

Also *Vattenfall* began a financially strong battle over the allegedly "worthless" networks with large newspaper advertisements daily and multipage advertising inserts in the newspapers distributed free of charge.

As from any referendum also in this case lessons can be learned:

The giant financial effort of the opponents may have diminished the lead of the referendum's proponents (according to polls, in spring nearly 60% of the Hamburg citizen still voted for the buy-back), but ultimately the people were not susceptible to bribery! That is gratifying. But it would be a requirement of fairness that the initiators of the "no campaign" would just reveal their fundings as the initiative is already today legally obliged to. "Our Hamburg – Our Network" had a budget of EUR 190,000. The representative *Manfred Braasch* (BUND) estimates the advertising budget of the opposite side at 10 to 20 million euro. Now, the Chamber of Commerce has made it public that it had contributed 16,000 euros to posters, flyers – and advertising agency costs. The other participants still keep quiet.

Immediately after becoming aware of the result, the SPD in Hamburg solemnly promised to engage for implementation of the citizen's vote despite their expressed opposition to the referendum. But it must be stated that it had hindered an objective debate on the facts between the citizens ahead of the decision by the proposal of a 25.1% deal, the decision on the secrecy of the contract and the "2 billion euro" fear campaign (the binding force of referendums for the Hamburg Government is now enshrined in the Constitution). One must unfortunately conclude that the idea of the "people as sovereign" apparently induces still great unease among many German politicians. A referendum for the repurchase of electricity grid and the establishment of ecological and democratically controlled public utilities can take place in Berlin only on November third. For tactical reasons, the Berlin Senate has decoupled the vote from the federal elections, because in the capital a quorum of participation is valid, which would almost certainly have been reached, but it is hard to reach outside other elections. Anyone trying to avoid referendums with political trickery is not on par with the citizens, as should be self-evident in a democracy.

At the federal level, all efforts have failed so far (by the CDU/CSU blockade) to introduce the referendum as an instrument of political co-determination. As all other parties in the election campaign except of CDU/CSU advocated the introduction of nationwide referendums, it will be interesting to see whether the issue will play a part in the coalition talks. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“Switzerland does not engage in power politics and has no hidden agendas”

Report and interviews from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) annual conference in Lugano

thk. On Friday, 27 September, the annual conference of the *Swiss Development Cooperation Agency for Development and Cooperation* (SDC) and the *State Secretariat for Economic Affairs* (SECO) was held in Lugano at the *Palazzo dei Congressi*. The topic was “A fragile World – Young People’s Perspectives”.

A remarkable number of young people, mainly from Ticino, were present. The title of the conference focussed especially on young people, who are particularly affected by fragile contexts (see box below). What “fragile contexts” means was brought home to the interested participants by means of films and personal narratives. It is a question of countries where the basic level of provision usually administered by the state is largely absent, i.e. the security situation is very precarious, there is no functioning police force,

no regular education, lack of healthcare, lack of infrastructure, there is malnutrition, poor or no water supply, and no trace of any social care by the state. The consequence is an absolute lack of prospects for those affected, especially the young, who have their lives still ahead of them.

In these circumstances, the SDC is involved in projects that will help to give people a new perspective. At the conference, projects in Honduras, Niger and Egypt were presented, and interviews with people from the affected areas were conducted. Federal Councillor *Schneider-Ammann* spoke the closing words, and announced an increased commitment of Switzerland in fragile contexts and in coping with global risks.

The main focus of the event was on the perspectives of young people in fragile contexts. A new social network “Govis-

mundi” was created, which deals with issues of development cooperation.

As young people in particular are victims of these catastrophic conditions in fragile contexts, it is all the more remarkable that in the SDC video competition young people from a highly developed country like Switzerland draw attention to the plight of their young colleagues in distant countries by means of short but very moving films. In this way they make a very valuable contribution to development cooperation. What various challenges, for instance in the area of safety, Switzerland is faced with in fragile contexts and why the SDC and SECO accept these challenges, you can learn from the two interviews with the director of the SDC, Ambassador *Martin Dahinden*, and the head of the SDC office in Bamako (Mali), *Mirko Manzoni*. •

Be in direct contact with the people and not simply focus on technical solutions

Interview with Ambassador *Martin Dahinden*, Director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)



Martin Dahinden
(picture *thk*)

Current Concerns: How does the SDC deal with the issue of safety in countries or regions where one can speak of fragile contexts?

Martin Dahinden: When working in fragile contexts, there are

two levels of risks. The first level is the security for the SDC staff, but also for the partners who work in these programs. The second is the risk for the projects and programs themselves. You start something in one country, and then tensions rise once more, and then at the end you have to say, one has taken a very great effort but achieved very little effect.

How can you prevent the risk or at least keep it as small as possible?

For these aspects the key element is that you watch very closely what is happening locally. This is the alpha and omega. That we have people there who create a very, very exact “mapping”, an accurate record, so you do not have to rely on general estimates, but you know exactly which people

are related how and what their intentions are. This can greatly reduce the risks. It is also important that in such contexts you can establish contact to these actors and that you know these people personally. This is the bottom line.

However, this could also mean that you have to cancel a project.

Of course, if the risks grow too high, there eventually comes a point where we must say, a continuation of the work is no longer possible. Of course, we do not endanger our staff.

Were there such cases where you had to cancel a project?

They existed, for example, when we had to withdraw people from Yemen some time ago, because the risk was too big for us. But you have to watch that carefully.

You spoke of two levels.

The second is the risk for the program, which comes into play when you have to withdraw the people on-site and the program can no longer be continued there. This must be weighed carefully. In the last year we had a political discussion on this subject. We have clearly posed the question to the parliamentary commissions: If we engage more in fragile contexts, where people suffer the most hard-

ship, we need to be aware that one or the other will fail.

The answer in Parliament was positive across the whole spectrum of parties. It’s good to get involved there, first because the people there suffer most, but secondly also because Switzerland has certain advantages there. We are often perceived as neutral. We do not pursue power politics and that makes it possible to work in places where others have withdrawn themselves.

Can you give a concrete example?

I spent some time, for example, some time ago to the northwest of Pakistan, in the Swat Valley on the border to Afghanistan, where virtually nobody works any longer. I talked to the people there, and it was interesting to see how relatively accurate the people there are informed about the political attitude and values of Switzerland. This was also one of the reasons why we have said that if we have a chance there that other countries do not have, we should dare it.

What is the decisive factor that Switzerland has more leeway there?

Switzerland does not pursue any power politics and has no hidden agendas. This

Fragile States: Extension of the commitment of Swiss Development Aid

ef. In September 2012 the Swiss Parliament decided on the continuation of international cooperation in the period 2013–2016, which is to comprise the tasks of humanitarian aid, development cooperation, economic and trade policy measures in the context of development cooperation and the cooperation with the countries of Eastern Europe for the first time in one document. With the beginning of this year, this federal decision has been implemented. The principal objective of development cooperation remains poverty reduction. In the future Switzerland will work more closely in fragile contexts. This applies to the regions of the Great Lakes, the Horn of Africa, Southern Africa, Niger, Chad, North Africa/Palestine, Hindu Kush, Mekong, Nepal and Haiti. With the development cooperation Switzerland wants to engage for democracy, rule of law and human rights and promote powerful governmental bodies and institutions of the civil society. As a neutral country without a colonial past, it has the best prerequisites for working in this difficult context. It is also considered to be impartial, has no strategic ulterior motives, is engaged in the long term and has experience in supporting fragile states.

Approximately 1.5 billion people live in fragile or conflict-affected states. For most of the people, this means a life of poverty, fear, insecurity and hopelessness. They are the poorest of the poor. According to the *World Bank* the recent world economic crisis

with its increasing food costs drove an additional 70 million people into extreme poverty. Meanwhile, over 40 States worldwide are considered to be fragile or affected by violence and conflict. "Switzerland intends to focus its support more strongly on countries and regions where state structures are fragile or lacking, because weak governments, inadequate legal security and corruption exacerbate poverty-related problems." (*Message on Switzerland's International Cooperation in 2013–2016*). Switzerland will therefore increase its commitment particularly in fragile states in the next few years (see *Current Concerns* No. 28 of 18 September 2013).

There is no standard definition of state fragility. However, "countries in which the state institutions are weak or lack stability and whose populations suffer from extreme poverty, violence, corruption and political arbitrariness, are internationally designated as fragile states. The governments of fragile states are either unwilling or unable to perform basic governance functions in the areas of security, rule of law and basic social services. Furthermore there is no mutually constructive relationship between the government and society and no effort to cooperate in the definition of political and socio-economic development objectives." ("Fragile States – poverty, instability and violence", SDC). Fragile states are twice as likely to be affected by malnutrition and infant mortality as other developing countries and it

is three times more likely that children in these countries will be unable to attend school and twice as likely that the population will have no access to clean drinking water.

According to the *World Bank* report countries that have been suffering from war for years need between 15 and 30 years to re-stabilize.

The term "fragile contexts" refers to OECD's ten Principles for Good International Engagement in Fragile States, which oblige the actors of development cooperation to define their contribution to reducing political and social conflicts, and basing them on the respective context. The principles are a cornerstone of the SDC's work in fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions:

1. Take context as the starting point
2. Ensure all activities to do no harm
3. Focus on state-building as the central objective
4. Prioritise prevention
5. Recognise the links between political, security and development objectives
6. Promote non-discrimination as a basis for inclusive and stable societies
7. Align with local priorities in different ways in different contexts
8. Agree on practical co-ordination mechanisms between international actors
9. Act fast – but stay engaged long enough to give success a chance
10. Avoid pockets of exclusion ("aid orphans")

"Be in direct contact with the people ..."

continued from page 7

actually gives us a leeway. I took Pakistan as an example, because there conflicts of political power are taking place, as well. We found similar conditions also in Nepal. This is important in order to work in such conflict contexts. But what is also very important, is, that you gain important local knowledge, that one is in direct contact with the people and not simply focuses on technical solutions without looking at the people who are living there where we work.

What kind of projects are there in Pakistan?

There are two things that I saw that was in the northwestern part of Pakistan on the border to Afghanistan. There were school projects, particularly for girls. The second were programs that provide income. One had supported the people, in building up a business under these difficult conditions, for example, breeding poultry. These are the two things that I saw there.

It is impressive that the SDC and you as its director go there and thereby expose yourself to significant hazards.

I must say that I myself was only there for a day. Of course it is our staff who

makes this work there. Of course, I also know that they do it under difficult conditions, and that is the reason why we said in the Directorate of SDC, we as members of the Directorate also go on-site. This must not always necessarily be the director. But it is important that our employees see that the management deals with these conditions, practically, as well.

Thank you, Mr Ambassador Dahinden, for the answers.

(Interview Thomas Kaiser)

“To be present with the people in need is an obligation for us”

Interview with Mirko Manzoni, head of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Mali*



Mirko Manzoni
(picture thk)

Current Concerns: There is a very fragile situation in Mali, How is it possible to find reliable partners there? Mr. Dahinden explained that you have to assess the security conditions with the people who live there.

How can you build up the confidence that you need to rely on the assessments of the people?

Mirko Manzoni: One of the big advantages we have as a Swiss Cooperation Office is that, especially in comparison with other development agencies, we are working directly in the area. The advantage of the Swiss development cooperation is that it is always present. In particular, this means that we in Bamako, even I myself with my tie, go to Sikasso and even to Timbuktu. I meet the people, these are confidential relationships.

Why do you act this way?

It is much more important than staying in Bamako and meet ministers. Only this way real relationships with mutual trust can be created, concerning the respective officials as well as with respect to the partners. That means that, despite of the fragility of the context, it is decisive to be close to the partner. This makes our commitment possible, and trust can grow this way. Another advantage is that all people working in our office are always on site. If we lose that, it would be a pity, because we are well-known by the other organizations for this form of cooperation, too.

What is the situation with the other organizations?

These are big agencies that do not handle things themselves. However, if you just give money, you usually go to the capital. I have colleagues who have never been out of Bamako. They never leave Bamako, they have been working for three to four years only in Bamako. To be present on site for people in need, however, is a commitment for us.

Once more I'd like to come back to the aspect, Ambassador Dahinden men-

tioned, namely how Switzerland is perceived by others. Is that also the case in Mali that one perceives Switzerland as a neutral country and there is more confidence therefore?

The question of neutrality, it must be emphasized, is a matter of direct relationship. It needs a culture of open communication in order to show the others, that one is neutral. Sometimes this is not easy.

What are your difficulties in this context?

Here is an example: If you are in Mali, where the situation is difficult, and you say you work in the North, without explaining to the South, why and what you are doing and with whom you are cooperating, you run the risk to be considered as not neutral in the south. The situation of the Swiss was very precarious at certain moments. But above all thanks to the good communication and our relationships there it was possible that we were regarded as neutral. Neutrality can't simply be won because you are neutral, but you have to convey this neutrality because you must live it. Misunderstandings can happen quickly, and this is especially the case in fragile contexts.

This seems to be a great challenge. How do you deal with it?

One thing is very special: If we say that we want to work in a conflict region, we run the risk to be mistrusted or even criticized because the people from the conflict region classify us to be from the other side. If you look at Switzerland's strategy in Mali, it is clear that we – as Swiss – want to work there, where most of the problems occur. The more we work there, where the problems occur, the greater is the risk to be met with criticism. The direct dialogue with the people in the field is fundamental. Otherwise you can really get into trouble and have serious problems. In Bamako we developed a real communication strategy that helps avoiding misunderstandings. Each activity is designed in such a way that it cannot be misinterpreted – from one side or the other. The direct dialogue is the foundation, otherwise you will have to leave the country very quickly.

Mr Manzoni, thank you for the interview. •

(Interview with Thomas Kaiser)

Neutral Switzerland's obligations in the world

mw. The interview with Ambassador Dahinden and Mirko Manzoni clearly emphasizes the essential work which “Deza” (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC) renders to many countries of the world, where they contribute to the survival and a more decent existence of many people.

The two SDC employees confirm that Switzerland, on the basis of its status of neutrality, has many opportunities to assist with humanitarian and civilian means or work through diplomatic channels. Reading the report from Mali we recall that in Spring 2013 Federal Councillor Didier Burkhalter, head of the EDA (DFA=Federal Department of Foreign Affairs) had planned to deploy the Swiss Army to warring Mali under the command of the EU. Fortunately, this did not materialize, especially because of the opposition of parliamentarians and citizens against this project that would have clearly been violating Swiss neutrality. Switzerland has a different task in this war-torn and distressed world than participating in wars.

According to Article 54 paragraph 2 of the Federal Constitution, the Swiss foreign policy has to be limited to the policy of peace and neutrality: The

federal government is committed “to maintaining the independence of Switzerland and its welfare; it shall, in particular, contribute to alleviating poverty and misery in the world, to respect human rights and promote democracy, the peaceful coexistence of peoples and the conservation of natural resources.”

Neutral Switzerland meets this constitutional obligation by means of diverse contributions of the SDC and the ICRC, as well as in its authorized capacity as the headquarters of the ICRC and the guardian of the Geneva Conventions, as host of numerous UN agencies and other international organizations dedicated to peace work. Also the good services that have been available on Swiss soil and through Swiss diplomats for centuries are only possible because of the neutrality of the Swiss Confederation.

The deployment of Swiss troops in war zones can clearly not be derived from Article 54 paragraph 2 of the Federal Constitution. Therefore, on 24 September 2009 the National Council clearly rejected the participation of the Swiss army in the EU operation *Atalanta* (by 102 votes, out of almost all factions, against 81). That was why the military action proposed by EDA-head Burkhalter could not take place.

* Since 2012 Mirko Manzoni has been head of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Mali (49 employees, CHF 20 million annual budget, one of the largest national programs of the SDC)

Offering the youth a perspective – an important contribution to political stability

thk. Life in fragile contexts was the main theme of the “Deza” (Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC) Yearly Congress in Lugano. That especially young people suffer from state fragility is also a subject area which should by all means be included in history or state education lessons. This September edition 3/2013 of the SDC magazine “One World” also dedicates itself above all to the theme “Fragility – Life in Violence, Fear and Poverty”.

Honduras was shown as an example of what life in a fragile context means. Honduras, which never experienced a civil war itself, was severely involved, through the civil wars in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, without receiving the usual international help like the other states. Since more than two decades, security has been constantly aggravated. Shootings in open streets are a daily occurrence and the population must somehow survive it. The main problem is the gang criminality, especially among the frustrated and jobless youths. In no country is the murder rate as high as in Honduras, which counted 34 murders per 100,000 inhabitants in 2004, whereas the number has more than doubled in 2012 up to 85.5 murders per year. Altogether 7,172 people were the victims of violent crimes in 2012.

Whereas in the last thirty years the population rate doubled, the economy fully stagnated. The great poverty and viewing the future without a perspective make it easy for drug dealers and criminal gang bosses, but they also have an

easy game because the legal system and the police are weakened through corruption and criminality. In large areas of the country, there is no legal protection and the people are on their own. The government tries to bring in more order but until now has had little success. The absence of such a functioning state and a police department that is fully at its limit, has turned Honduras into an Eldorado for the drug mafia. Experts find this to be the main cause for the escalating violence. In this country, there are hardly any future perspectives for teenagers and, whoever is a teenager, is automatically treated with suspicion because of the high youth criminality. As a result, it is difficult for young adults to find proper jobs.

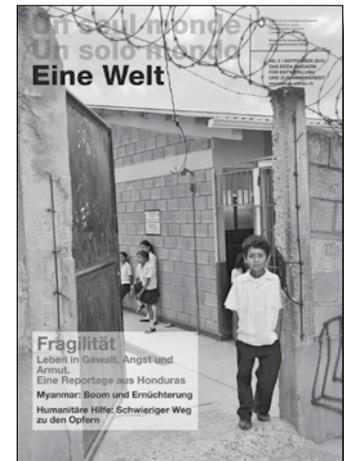
The building of a state structure

SDC has been engaged in Honduras since 1977. Due to the loss of state authority, it reacts with a special strategy developed for this type of situation and focuses on themes such as human rights, justice and police. Switzerland has gotten involved with its own financial means in reforming the police, which, under the leadership of the *Inter-American Development Bank* (IDB) is carried out together with the Honduran authorities.

The Swiss commitment covers several different levels. In order to make the country safer, a well-educated, well-equipped police department is required that is positively perceived by the population. Simultaneously, however, the people also need a perspective, especially the youth. Special educational projects should offer the people an opportunity. In many cities, with Swiss support, there are courses offered to the youth who come from precarious backgrounds. They can learn how to weld, or become a hairdresser, an electrician or a baker which enables them to earn their own living. This is an important contribution to the stability of society.

Community development, a contribution to reconciliation

Fragility must not affect an entire country, rather it can also affect a single region as well. Myanmar is an obvious example. The country had experienced an economic boom which prospered mostly in the larger city centers. Where trade is thriving, more cars, more tourists and more business people are seen on a daily basis. On the outskirts or in the country, the situation however, is totally different. The shadow of the economic boom, due to



exterior influence, is not to be overlooked. Where business is not possible, there is no room for development. As a result, poverty in the workers quarters on the edge of Yangon is especially obvious.

In addition, the country is under pressure caused by ethnically or religiously motivated tensions and violent fights which were sparked last year between the Buddhist majority and the Muslim minority, the Rohingya. This year as well, constant attacks were observed mostly on the Muslim minority. In 2012, Switzerland decided to open an embassy there, however, since the devastating Cyclone Nagris in 2008, it already supplied humanitarian help on the spot. The central point of the rebuilding lies in the construction of new school buildings. Here, trust in Switzerland is developing, which offers the possibility, in the sense of community development, to get the enemy or fighting parties to come together and therefore assist in the reconciliation of the people by having a common project to work on.

Street project in Burkina Faso – security for farmers and traders

An inspiring example of Swiss development cooperation is the street construction project in Burkina Faso. Burkina Faso belongs to the poorest countries of the world and often has conflicts in the Sahel zone. Switzerland has been helping this country since 1976. The building of infrastructure is an important contribution to economic development. Here Switzerland follows a special project of the so-called “Himo Method” (*Haute Intensité de Main-d’oeuvre*). This requires as many inhabitants as possible to be employed in the workforce. In the building of streets, machines are not seen instead one sees picks, shovels and uncounta-

continued on page 11

thk. The estimation of the Ambassador Dahinden, that Switzerland “does not possess a hidden agenda and does not enforce political power, is the decisive pillar for the Swiss community development.” Because Switzerland is neutral it can provide help, other countries have no access to the nations concerned and therefore are unable to find the people who are suffering. It is a precious jewel which we may not simply give away. When the exterior politics of the Head of the Departments for Foreign Affairs, *Didier Burkhalter*, continue to bow to the EU and to NATO, as we have been increasingly observing lately, we will lose some basics for our country as well as dealing in international contexts, including being mediator in cases of conflict. We must not allow that to happen.

Reflections on food security

by President of the Federal Council Ueli Maurer, speech on the occasion of the OLMA* opening in St. Gallen on 10 October 2013



President of the Federal Council Ueli Maurer (picture thk)

Thank you for the invitation, which I followed with great pleasure. For me the visit to the Olma is like coming home: Trade, craft, agriculture, this is the real world for me. And I am delighted to present the government's compliments.

Since there are duties and voluntary exercises in a President of the Federal Council's year of office, I have arrived at the voluntary exercise, today.

The Olma has its roots in the early forties. Food was rationed. At that time the existence of the country depended on the army and the agriculture.

Such circumstances are a long way off for us – at least we have the feeling that they are a long way off.

If one lives in peace and prosperity, the fulfilment of basic needs is being taken for granted: We do not feel threatened directly. And the shelves in the stores are always full. We have good years behind us and we have become improvident. We behave in such a way as if neither the security of the Confederation nor the food security could be endangered ever once again. In general politics' expenditures are very generous, however, the Confederation's security and the food security are under permanent pressure. However, these are exactly our most elementary needs.

Fortunately citizens have the possibility over and over again to take counter measures. Next year in all probability we will have a vote on the procurement of a new fighter aircraft for the army – this is a cru-

cial vote concerning our security. Please, use this opportunity for a clear affirmation of our country's security!

In peace and prosperity many people approach not only the army with a lack of understanding, but also the domestic agriculture. However, is the world really a supermarket with a forever luxuriant choice of products from which we can simply help ourselves at any time? This is what I would like to focus on:

Let us reflect on how the world develops. Doing so we quickly realize that in the area of agriculture, food security and national economic supply we are going to face immense changes. I would like to address here some trends to which too little attention is paid, although actually, the alarm bells would have to be ringing.

The world population increases: And it does so very fast. Population statistic experts count on an annual growth of about 80 million people. In about 12 to 13 years this amounts to a growth of one billion – thousand million people more who must also eat and drink every day.

The food prices are rising: During the last years quite massive price increases of basic foodstuffs in certain world regions occurred over and over again. This shows us that the demand increases. Resources are becoming more scarce, worldwide; regardless of whether oil, water, basic commodities or food are concerned. And scarce means that goods are desired and thus expensive.

Food has a political significance: Since most countries cannot bear such massive price increases neither economically nor politically. The results are political riots which are often triggered or aggravated by rising food prices. Middle East experts also see, for example, protests and revolutions in the Arabian countries in connection with rising food prices.

We all know that scarce resources as for example oil have a political significance.

Even war is waged about oil. We must assume that also food might obtain such a political significance in future times.

Worldwide a race about resources is taking place: A worldwide race of the great powers arises from this political significance of food about agricultural resources. This has already begun:

With investments, contracts and exertion of political influence western states and ambitious Asian states try to secure their supply – and to pre-empt the others.

Those states which can afford it are buying up vast stretches of valuable agricultural land in the whole world. The most topical announcement is only a few days old: "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" reported, China buys arable land in the Ukraine with an expanse almost as huge as Switzerland. If a country like China which has been known for long-term strategies since centuries invests in his security of supply to such an extent, it should give us food for thought.

The world is not becoming more stable: One says, the world becomes smaller, it becomes a village. One can really get this impression, with respect to the manner in which goods are exchanged, how people travel and how we follow the world events, as if they were happening in our own living room.

But this impression is deceptive. The distances do not shrink, there are the connections which become better. And then with these connections everything stands and falls.

The international exchange of commodities becomes more and more complicated and with that also more susceptible for disturbances. We have no guarantee that the routes of transport will always be open and the communication will always work. Not only land routes and water routes, but also the virtual connections can be interrupted.

continued on page 12

"Offering the youth ..."

continued from page 10

ble hands which are employed in a useful way. Stones from the region are used as construction material which need to be dug out and brought to the site. The newly created streets, which are useable throughout the entire year, now meet the needs of the population. The rainy season is always a problem which softens the natural streets and makes them impassible. In order for trade to be carried

out through the entire country, developed streets are necessary.

The work is hard and requires a lot of stamina and a large participation of the population. To encourage political decentralization, the street projects are planned and implemented by the communities because later they have to manage their maintenance and in order to do this, must acquire the necessary know-how. Until today, this method has financed 300 km of street construction, 126 bridges to cross waterways through which approx-

imately 50 villages, with a headcount of close to 500,000 inhabitants, are connected. This provides the traders and farmers with security now that they can bring their products to the markets without any problems.

The individual examples of the countries, which were briefly illustrated here, show the reader not only what it is like to work in fragile contexts, they are also suitable for making young people become aware of these problems and their solutions.

"Reflections on food security"

continued from page 11

Until recently many believed, the world and in particular Europe would grow together to a community of states and the economic linkage would result in a global labour division: Everybody does what he is able to do best – and this worldwide.

With the debt crisis this development is indeed put to question. The differences between the different national economies have not become smaller, on the contrary! Under the pressure of the crisis the discussions have also become harder between friendly states – in distress it is every man for himself.

We have witnessed that the great powers are increasingly setting on power instead of on law. Before this background we must be aware that every dependence makes us susceptible to blackmail.

Conclusion

If we summarise briefly and figuratively: There is an essential difference between our villages and the "global village". In the village we cross over the street to the neighbour if unfortunately, for example, we lack one kilo of flour. However, we Swiss cannot knock simply on the next door if we have run short of bread cereals in our country.

All of a sudden we are glad, that we have our own farmers and do not have to obtain everything from the middle of nowhere.

Reflections on security of supply

What is to be done? I think we should include the global developments to an even greater degree in our deliberations on agriculture. Internationalization and structural change are to be questioned. By contrast, our strength – the uniquely high quality – should be maintained further on.

From my point of view it is high time to discuss our security of supply in public. I would like to contribute to this discussion with seven theses:

1. Avoid dependences

Partially we receive our products from countries which are far from being politically stable. Thereby their instability becomes our problem, too. That doesn't speak against trade with such countries. But it speaks against placing oneself onto their dependence if it is avoidable. Because we don't want to depend on others and thereby become susceptible to blackmail.

But not only is the dependence on one vendor awkward, also the complete dependence on the global market can be problematic with essentials like foodstuffs.

Therefore it is clear to me that agriculture is not simply a matter of economy, because it is a matter of the provision of nourishment.

The German word expresses what I want to point out: "Lebensmittel" stands

for nourishments and means "means in order to live and to survive". Therefore it is wrong just to ask for profitability and cost with respect to nourishment. Agriculture performs a task within the country's interest; it makes a contribution to keep our sovereignty. And in a crisis it makes a contribution to survive. A strong indigenous agriculture and a maximum autonomy of sustenance must be valuable to us.

2. Enlarge the degree of self-sufficiency and save cultivation area

If we want to take the global development seriously it must be our target to enlarge the degree of self-sufficiency. Only this way we can minimize dependences. Only then can we ensure that interruption of the flow or shortage of goods does not lead to supply bottlenecks.

The degree of self-sufficiency, however, can not only be enlarged by modern cultivation methods. For the production of food good acreage is simply indispensable.

Land is also needed for other purposes: We need space for new flats; areas are needed for the building up of infrastructure. Driving through Switzerland one can see growing villages everywhere and cultivation area being reduced. This is not entirely surprising considering the huge immigration. But it is not unproblematic to sheet very good farmland, because once sheeted with buildings or infrastructure the area is lost for agriculture and the provision of nourishment for ever. I am concerned how fast the ground disappears that should feed us. Therefore I think it is high time to save our agricultural land for the future.

3. Produce healthy and good products

We have always gone in for quality. In all areas. Swiss quality is a trademark, an essential and characteristic feature of our country. Certainly we don't want to relinquish on it related to food at least. Eventually it's about our health and the handling of nature and environment.

An industrialized agriculture with transportation of animals right across Europe can simply not be likeable for us, the Swiss people.

Our local foodstuffs are distinguished by worldwide highest quality. That's a competitive advantage: buying Swiss food one doesn't have to fear a food-scandal.

The high quality of nourishment also has a direct effect on the healthy nutrition of the population and thus the public health and the healthcare costs. But above all good and healthy products represent the quality of life.

Therefore we want to continue focusing on the quality of life. But this presupposes a professional agriculture – and thereby I have reached the next point ...

4. Focus on professional agriculture

It is great that so many people deal with agriculture as a hobby. But it is tragic when professional farmers earn so less on their farms, that they have to look for another job and can run their farm only within their spare time.

And it's even more than only tragic: If we degrade our farmers to hobby-farmers we lose incredibly much know-how.

For these professionals dispose of the knowledge how to produce the world's best nourishment. If they lose their basis of existence, our country loses this know-how and thereby naturally its high standard of quality. This would set the country back for decades.

And in the event of a crisis it is even worse: like the army one cannot reconstruct the agriculture within a period of a few years. In times of a crisis one cannot compensate what was neglected before.

5. Preserve a producing agriculture

An ecologically sustainable production is important and strengthens the customer's trust in the products.

But we must be careful not to exaggerate things: It cannot be that the high ideal of sustainability keeps us from producing. Alpine roses are nice, but we can't eat them.

Agriculture is to be a production sector which has got a meaning for the national economy and not only for the landscape conservation. Farmers are entrepreneurs and they need the necessary scope for entrepreneurial innovation. With too much regulation we stall creative developments of this sector.

In other words: First one prescribes everything and then one criticizes the loss of adaptability to market trends.

6. Keep the processing industry in the country

What applies to production, is also valid for the further processing. We put every emphasis on quality, high standards are important.

But let us take care that we do not weaken the food industry against foreign competitors with absurd over-regulation or force them to migrate abroad.

7. Strengthen Switzerland as a location

And that brings me to my seventh and final point: We must in principle enhance our concern for our business location Switzerland. For not only agriculture and the processing industry suffer more and more from government regulations. The increasing regulation also burdens many other industries.

I have previously spoken of how the harder competition for resources will shape the world. That is one side of global

“Curriculum 21” : Switzerland has deserved something better

by Daniel Jenny

Fortunately, the article "Curriculum 21 from a legal point of view" in the edition of *Current Concerns* 15 of October shows that no canton can be prescribed to take on this curriculum. This applies to all cantons – regardless of whether the respective canton ever joined the "HarmoS Agreement" or not.

In the following I would like to explain my reasons why "Werkplatz" Switzerland (Werkplatz = center of industry, research and production) deserves something better than this curriculum. I teach students of informatics (apprentices) at a public vocational college in the Canton of St. Gallen. Vocational schools qualify the students 1 or 2 days a week to enable them as citizens and professionals to achieve a good apprenticeship certificate. Like rest of the week they work in training company. Their education lasts 4 years. Even young colleagues who teach less than 5 years noticed that the performance level of many students has declined in Maths and German. This is not because the students are not interested in the job, but because they have not acquired the necessary knowledge. The training enterprises and vocational schools try to work up the missing competences. As soon as there is some initial success after an intensive training phase, the learners are encouraged and can recover in terms of performance. This ought to be granted to all young people.

"Curriculum 21" is the proposed curriculum for the first 9 to 10 school years (secondary school). Now it would be a

good opportunity for the new "Curriculum 21" to prepare students better for an apprenticeship. What is required, for example, in mathematics? What can the vocational schools build upon? Let us take up, as an example, the topic "equations", since the transforming of formulas is important in technical professions. The currently valid curriculum for the first 9 to 10 school years requires the following skills as objectives for equations:

- Resolve first-degree equations with one unknown, each with or without an unknown in the denominator.¹

This objective is clearly formulated in the current curriculum of the secondary school for all pupils. Let us investigate why fewer and fewer students are able to master it. Are the teaching materials or teaching methods not conducive to the achievement of this objective? Instead of improving the way of achieving it, this objective is going to be completely abandoned for the students at the basic level of secondary school. Only for students in the expansion level of upper grades (of the secondary school) the "Curriculum 21" prescribes as a school leaving objective:

- The pupils can solve linear equations with one variable by means of equivalent transformations.²

For these students, the objective is simplified, since the task of solving an equation with one unknown in the denominator is omitted. It is indeed curious that the performance requirements for the young generation are lowered, although the Federal Council wants to strengthen precisely the MINT professions with their fields of math-

ematics, informatics, natural science and technology ...

When reading "Curriculum 21" some peculiar objectives in Maths struck me. "The students ...

- ... can distinguish between exact and rounded figures/values.³
- ... situationally decide whether to operate with rounded or exact figures."

Should these really be objectives for the final year of high school? Should we be satisfied with that? Moreover, I noticed "non-mathematical items" in arithmetic under the section "exploring and reasoning". "The students ...

- ... can get involved in challenging open tasks."⁴

What does "get involved" in a Maths problem mean? Psychological interpretations have no place in arithmetics lessons. Students should not be interpreted, but get instructed in the basic subjects.

The young generation in Switzerland deserves to be supported and challenged. With omitted or unclear goals the young professionals do not acquire the necessary tools for a successful apprenticeship.

My explanations aim at supporting the legal argument elaborated in the article mentioned above, why the cantons cannot be obliged to take over the "Curriculum 21". The Canton of St. Gallen has entered the "HarmoS Concordat". Consequently the following HarmoS objective applies to the "Curriculum 21": "During compulsory education each student acquires the

continued on page 14

"Reflections on food security"

continued from page 12

development. The other side is the sharper competition between business locations.

We are well positioned for that, we have innovative SMEs, we have well-trained and strenuous employees, we have legal security and political stability. But unfortunately we also have a tendency to make life of our companies hard with ever more bureaucratic rules.

Let us watch out not to overburden all those with prohibitions and requirements to whom our country owes its prosperity!

Connectedness with country and peasantry

So far my seven theses. But I'm still not quite at the end. Because there is something else, there is more to our agricul-

ture. I will say it this way: There is a fateful connection of country and agriculture.

The peasantry used to be called the "Nährstand" (nutritional profession). This matches the meaning well: The "Nährstand", these are the women and men who feed the people. These are the women and men who ensure that enough, that healthy and good food is available. These are the women and men who take care of our food security.

If we look at agriculture this way, all the singular detail questions move to the background. Because it is about very much. Actually about everything: It's about our "daily bread". For this daily bread generations before us have worked hard on their farms and prayed the "Our Father". The nourishment, the daily food, the work to "earn one's bread" this is what has shaped our history, our customs and our traditions.

Thus agriculture also means there is an emotional relationship to our country that has given us "our daily bread" for centuries. Our agriculture stands for a close commitment and connectedness to our homeland, for the beautiful, well-maintained landscape, for a livestock breeding appropriate to the species, for a responsible use of the environment, for a healthy peasantry, who lives our well-proven values.

A country without agriculture, a country without peasantry loses the reference to the past, to the nature, to tradition, to its customs, to the soil – and thus it loses its values and roots.

As such a country, we would not survive very long.

I thank you for your attention and wish you some wonderful days at the Olma! •

“Curriculum 21’: ...”

continued from page 13

basic education allowing access to vocational training [...].”⁵

By “Curriculum 21” this objective will certainly not be achieved.

Similar approach at vocational colleges

The proceedings in context of the “Curriculum 21” have reminded me of those in my own vocational college environment. The training for the job of an information specialist is laid down in training regulations, which now are planned to be subjected to a revision. For our school, this would mean that we would have to cut the number of lessons for mathematics and sciences by half, without any other subject obtaining more lessons in return. If the learners from obligatory secondary school bring along less knowledge and skills, this, of course, is no longer striking, if the curriculum contents are also restricted by the recipient schools themselves. Do we with such measures really intend to strengthen the small and medium enterprises? Who will take the responsibility of such a foolish act? This smells of egalitarianism channeled in by international organizations such as the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) and the EU. Every-

thing equal, however, does not mean that it is better! Once again to force into line means lowering down.

In addition to the lowering of the performance level in the obligatory secondary school and in the apprenticeship of an information specialist another similar procedure is conspicuous:

- Many training companies did not agree with the new training regulations. They were referred to an electronic survey, which in some relevant points did not allow stating one’s opinion, because only ready-made multiple-choice responses were possible. There were points on which more than 80 % of the training companies did not agree.
- The principals of the vocational schools spoke up vehemently against the new training regulations for the informatics apprentices. Parallel to the consultation of the vocational schools, the cantons are allowed to deliver an opinion. But this has been undermined, as in the “House of the Cantons” an “expert group” has been established, who delivers its own opinion. Now then, how did it turn out? They declared that the companies were delighted with the new training regulations. This was claimed by them even with respect to issues to which the majority of the training companies did precisely not consent. – What would you call that, if a situation is incorrectly reported?

It is only natural, that the statements of training companies, represented by the “Labour Organizations” ODA (branch associations), and of schools can turn out controversially. Until now, I assumed that the majority of the training companies are taken into account, as the successful model of “dual vocational and educational system” is only possible with the training companies. We should really ensure the willingness of the training companies for the future of Switzerland as an industrial center. So should the “Staatssekretariat für Bildung, Forschung und Innovation, SBFI” (State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation). Changes should always be improvements. •

¹ cf. http://www.schule.sg.ch/home/volksschule/unterricht/lehrplan/20081/_jcr_content/Par/downloadlist/DownloadListPar/download_6.ocFile/8_Fachbereich_Mathematik.pdf, edition 2008, page 29

² <http://konsultation.lehrplan.ch/index.php?nav=15014111&code=a151011114>

³ <http://konsultation.lehrplan.ch/index.php?nav=15014113&code=a1510111311&PHPSESSID=b71f53c503ba286ac658478413940068>

⁴ <http://konsultation.lehrplan.ch/index.php?nav=15014112&code=a1510111211>

⁵ <http://www.zeit-fragen.ch/index.php?id=1601>

(Quotations translated by *Current Concerns*)

A backward defense force makes a country vulnerable

What today’s “fair-weather-generation” can learn from China

by Gotthard Frick, Beijing

The quotations are taken from an article of the English-speaking Communist newspaper “China Daily” of 8 October 2013. Author of the article “Chinese Dream includes strong PLA” [PLA = People’s Liberation Army, the author] is Xiangqing Meng, deputy director of the Institute for Strategic Studies at the National Defense University of China.

“The centerpiece of the Chinese Dream is the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and a nation cannot be rejuvenated without a strong military. A backward defense force makes a country vulnerable. This is a lesson that China has learned the hard way over centuries of humiliation at the hands of imperialist powers [...].”

“[...] never before have the Chinese people been so confident in building a strong nation and a strong military.”

“As President *Xi Jinping* has said, an important task for the country under new circumstances is to build a strong military that is ‘absolutely loyal’ to the *Communist Party of China*, will abide by discipline and be ready to ensure victory in any war.”

The article admits that the current prevailing, comparatively stable strategic conditions are strategically opportune for China. This, however, must not lead to the disadvantage that one no longer sees the various threats, above all the “persistent pressure from the Western world”. With this, admittedly, the United States supported by *NATO* are predominantly meant.

This explains why today the Chinese defense budget is already exceeding the one of the US in terms of purchasing power. In all the years, never before, the author has met a Chinese person – whether for or against the regime – who does not agree in building up a strong army. The wounds of the period from 1800 to 1949 are much too deep, when the country was repeatedly colonized, occupied, divided, and the people were humiliated by all major European powers, Japan and the United States. (It was written on the threshold of the great Western company headquarters in Shanghai: “No admittance for dogs and Chinese.”) No Chinese wants to let such a thing happen ever again.

Obviously China thinks in long historical periods, incorporates the bitter past of many years ago in its today’s decisions and therefore, the country is aware of the fact that the present peaceful constellation could change once more in a future war.

What a contrast to the attitude of our spoiled, saturated and rich people! For 200 years, we have been spared from being involved in wars thanks to the army. The current generation only knows 50 years of good weather. This is the only historical experience that it recognizes. It believes that these fat, peaceful years are God-given, forever and ever. Therefore the individual human being is the central part of the Swiss dream with its endlessly growing demands. In this dream there is no room for the financial and personal efforts that were required to maintain an army which according to the guidelines of the Chinese President for his country – transferred to our country – would meet and could be read just about:

“A strong army that keeps war from the country, and, if it comes to an attack, that is able to resist successfully very long.” •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

With a loving look at the people, at nature and the scenic beauty of Switzerland

On the life and work of the eminent Swiss painter Richard Wannemacher, at the occasion of his memorial exhibition at the Tannzapfenland Gallery TG

by Urs Knoblauch, cultural publicist, Fruthwilen TG

A visit to the beautiful Tannzapfenland Gallery in Eschlikon in Hinterthurgau and the lovely permanent art exhibition is a great pleasure. The visitor feels welcome in the hospitable atmosphere. It is here where the artist *Richard Wannemacher* (1923–1995) worked as an artist until his death. This year, he would have been 90. There is a permanent exhibition of the artistic legacy in the gallery which his wife and son *Martin Wannemacher* as well as other members of the family look after. Mrs Wannemacher herself has a talent for art. She produced simple toys for her children and handicraft objects for the annual Mission Bazaar. She modelled sculptures and human figures in everyday situations.

Richard Wannemacher's works may be found in some art collections and in the homes of many art lovers. In his works, a deep commitment and love for nature and landscape is expressed. In his diverse works of landscapes and clippings the painter is always capable of leading the viewer into the atmosphere of spatial depth and width of his village and nature motifs. In a precise and at the same time free painterly manner of realism, he captures the vegetation, the mood of light and colour of the seasons. One can feel that there is an artist at work, who learned to love the beauty of nature and landscape from childhood.

Visiting the Wannemacher family

We are comfortably sitting together with coffee and cake with son Martin, his wife and mother, Mrs Wannemacher. She tells us about her husband who had drawn a lot even as a child. "As a child, my husband was often sick. He had to go to a health resort where he had to stay in bed a lot. It was there where he took to drawing a lot. The doctor and his roommate, a graphic artist recognized his talent and encouraged him. He copied a lot of pictures. That was important and became beneficial for him. He was always like that. Later, when we went travelling, he immediately started drawing already at the railway station or at the airport: the things he saw and which he was interested in. This became his passion."

His further creative and painterly skills were enriched by autodidactic studies and his friendship with the painter *Hermann Peter*.



"Auf dem Sitzberg", 1973. (picture from the catalogue)

"To see our homeland – in a higher, more purified reality – when wandering through it"

His career and his work are perfectly visible in the many pictures in the gallery, as well as in the excellent art book "Querschnitt durch meine Malerei" (Survey on my way of painting, 1996) which was still designed and commented on by the artist himself. The preface reads as follows, "It forms part of the Wannemacher's work that the charm of his pictures are not actually based on the obvious beauty of the shown landscape, but on the manner in which he reclaims the special beauty of insignificant details from the landscape or a village. This way the images are just as honest and convincing. What is astonishing over and again with all the pictures is the certainty in craftsmanship. Each stroke of the brush seems as a natural necessity. The dimension between simplification and accuracy is always exactly right. The landscape, the homes, the village images are correct and yet at the same time lifted again into a higher reality. Wannemacher's pictures might be a guidance for us to view our home country with these eyes in a higher and more purified reality, when wandering through it." His great skills of craft and design are also manifested in his self-developed colour and relief-like "cement pictures" which he put on exhibition in the "Helmhaus" in Zurich, in the 70s. These works are the focus of the current exhibition. A short and very informative documentary of Martin Wannemacher shows the artist at work.

Some pictures also document the great changes in the realm of agriculture

The pictures are also a document of the major changes in agriculture. Much land became building land and in addition to the loss of agricultural land this led to immigration of families or new businesses to the communes. Numerous pictures of Richard Wannemacher show, "how it used to be." Mrs Hanny Wannemacher tells, when she recently "distributed the invitations to the exhibition, she hardly found her way due to the rapid change of individual parts of the village Eschlikon." Formerly, agriculture was pivotal. It's just thanks to agriculture, that the remaining magical landscapes in our country are so lovingly nourished and cherished. This work is often too little appreciated. The pictures thus stimulate thinking. Every day, traditional farms are abandoned in our country. The conditions in this beautiful and highly demanding profession have become so difficult that in some cases there is hardly a future for the existence of a family. At the same time, the necessary food security in Switzerland, in the European countries and worldwide will become very precarious. Together with the consequences of crazy wars and youth unemployment in many countries, social peace is threatened. Solutions have to be found urgently, youth has the right to a meaningful work and education to strengthen food security and agriculture, and to enable young families' initiatives and autonomy. It is encouraging that the agricultural training schools

continued on page 16

"With a loving look ..."

continued from page 15

in Switzerland are well staffed by young and proactive people. A counter-movement is developing. The much acclaimed World Agriculture Report 2008 provides possible solutions that should be taken to heart: "Small-scale based structures are the best guarantors of local food security, national and regional food sovereignty."

Growing up and creating something grand despite hard times due to courage, values and dedication

Richard Wannemacher was born and raised in Wettingen. His father was a good farmer and factory worker and he was able to build a small house with stable and barn for himself at the foot of the Lägern mountain range in the Canton of Aargau. There Richard spent his first fifteen years. As we can read in the exhibition catalogue: "My parents had a small farm with a cow, a pig, goats and rabbits. My father grew up as a foster child in a peasant family, he always wanted to be a farmer. In 1938, my parents exchanged the two Jucharts small estate with a farm in Schönau near Kirchberg. There, in the Toggenburg area very close to the Hinterthurgau, I began to paint." In an interesting conversation with Mrs Wannemacher, son Martin and his wife many details and background information about his impressive career and his pictures become alive. Here, you can feel the deeply Christian way of life, the love for our country and the way of living with the joys and sorrows in the world. Mrs. Wannemacher explains: "In 1939, when the war broke out, the parents had bought a small farm and Richard had just finished school. His father had to serve in the military and Richard had to work the farm together with his siblings and his mother. He would have wanted to perform a training as a gardener, however, this was made impossible by the war. He then had to do his military service until 1947, and besides, he worked on the family farm. The whole thing was a disaster." Such descriptions can be a strong incentive for the personal development of young people, if they listen more to their parents and grandparents and are eager to know what they have experienced.

On the importance of self-help, the cooperatives, and the "WIR-Geldwirtschaft"

In the Great Depression of the 20s and 30s and during the Second World War, also many valuable and current self-help organizations and cooperatives were founded. As well as the successful economic "Wirtschaftsring" cooperative with the

WIR money, which was founded in 1934 in Switzerland and had its model in Denmark, these alternative forms of social and economic activities are experiencing a prosperous period worldwide, especially among the younger generation. They resolutely reject the current anti-social financial rule of power. The WIR money has some aspects in common with the free-money theory of *Silvio Gesell*. Up to this day, the Wannemacher family is grateful for this social form of monetary system in which money is put into circulation in form of coupons and honest medium of exchange, it is not hoarded and does not ruin the economy in stock market speculations. The "WIR Bank" still is a successful SME Bank with various branches in Switzerland. Mrs Wannemacher and son Martin report: "This is a blessing for many people. Thanks to the WIR Bank, our father was able to build this house. He drew the plans himself and also built a lot himself. The WIR Bank gave him very favorable conditions, and we were able to pay it back. The money is not to be hoarded, this is the most important point of the WIR system. You are happy to earn it, and you are happy to spend it again. There are no interests. The WIR money must remain in circulation. This has facilitated our life very much. We have sold many pictures because we accepted 'WIR' and still enjoy doing so today." We also talk about the dignified life of the cooperative system and the fact that our young people should learn more about it. Why do the ever more uniform media report so little about it, even though it would be their task to do so? Here, our society has a very relevant task: to regain financial sovereignty in favour of the people and democracy.

In this context it is interesting to know that in 1940 the "Group of Thurgau Artists" and many other associations were founded. Richard Wannemacher was also a member. His objective was to make mutual aid and pictures accessible to everybody. And this at reasonable prices. He was in contact with other artists such as *Adolf Dietrich* and *Carl Roesch*. You needed a "godfather" in order to be admitted to the union. The members have indeed been deeply committed to the development of the *Art Museum of the Canton of Thurgau* in the *Kartause Ittingen*.

Unfortunately today, the art associations have been more and more centralized, "professionalized" and commercialized. That is why they departed more and more from their actual task and relationship to the broad public here and there.

Remain true to yourself – an ethical, understandable and connecting form of art

Particularly impressing in Richard Wannemacher's life is that he always remained faithful to himself and to his ethics and that he always maintained the figurative and realistic style of painting. He was connected to his people and environment and wanted to be understood. The realism in all its forms is a generally understandable and democratic form of expression, as opposed to abstract art. The figurative painter wanted to be understood by the people with their pictures. Therefore, the abstract art was never an issue for Richard Wannemacher. In the post-war period, it (as well as the atonal music and poetry) was highly touted by circles from America and promoted as the "great freedom" and as a sign of a "modern man" in Europe. Many artists who did not submit to this dictate, got into financial difficulties and were scarcely exhibited. Most people were not aware of the fact that this "modernity" was intended to lead to the dissolution of the European and humanistic values systems. So, through art the younger generation can learn from the mistakes of history and can contribute to an equal and peaceful coexistence of people oriented towards the common good. The work and the ethics of Richard Wannemacher can serve as an example. •

The gallery and the permanent exhibition can be visited by appointment, tel 071-971 19 15 or 071-971 35 30 or www.rwannemacher.ch. The pictures are for sale. The catalogue can also be purchased there.



Hanny Wannemacher between his son Martin Wannemacher and his wife. (picture lk)