

Current Concerns

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No grassroots medicine for highly developed Switzerland Our family doctor concept mustn't be cut down – No to the bluff package “Federal Decret on primary health care”

by Dr med Susanne Lippmann-Rieder and Dr med Viviane Kaiser

In our country we are used to our trustworthy family doctors whom we consult for all medical problems. Our family doctors are well-trained and keep up-to-date with the state of their art, they address all questions thoroughly. Often there are relationships having built up trust for years, the doctor knows the relatives and the personal situation of the patient.

More than 200,000 citizens signed the Swiss popular initiative “Say yes to family medicine” and they did so for justified fear of not having enough family doctors in future, as well as the sustainability of good clinical practice. The people want a “sufficient, unrestricted, professionally comprehensive and high-quality medical care provided by board-certified practitioners of family medicine.”¹

The direct counter-proposal against “Say yes to family medicine”, which will be voted on on 18.5.2014 under the headline “Federal Act on basic health care”,² is by no means comparable to the initiative’s text. The 26 members of the initiative committee were talked into withdrawing it, by Federal Councillor *Berset*, and this deal was made without ever consulting the basis of medical and paediatric doctors. The counter-initiative proposes to downgrade professional comprehensive medical care supplied by board-certified doctors to what they call “sufficient basic health care”. This term “sufficient basic health care” doesn’t get much clearer by a wordy but imprecise definition provided in the text.³

What does the counter-proposal understand by “basic health care”?

Scrutinizing the detailed background papers cited by the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) reveals that this is the attempt to implement OECD/WHO and EU concepts. The new health care concept of the Swiss federal government is modelled on the medical systems of the US, Canada, Great Britain and some Scandinavian countries.^{4/5} By introducing the term “basic health care” into the Federal Constitution this campaign is meant to be an easy win. Once this were achieved our

high standard health care system would already be downgraded and the position of the physician within the system would be weakened. It doesn’t come by chance that in the counter-proposal the terms “board-certified specialists of family medicine” and “professionally comprehensive” have been cancelled. With this new health care model the family doctor as we know him or her today is to be done away with.

1. Inter-professionalism instead of the family medicine

The plan is to replace medical practice directed by a family doctor and introduce inter-professional teams who practice mainly in health-centers. Inter-professionalism is defined as the activity of “hierarchy-free teams” in which people who used to be called physicians, pharmacists, nurses, physiotherapists or midwives all cooperate somehow to provide “basic health care”, together with specialist nurses, nutritionists or podologists.⁶

“Sine qua non of the integration into an inter-professional team is always the willingness of the practitioner to assume and fulfill the professional role assigned to him or her by the group regardless of actual qualification.”⁷

This crazy concept has to be stopped. Only professional qualification matters in health care.

In the new models the family doctor is done away with and his or her functions are supposed to be fulfilled by other practitioners: “Non-medical personnel shall become entitled to receive patients directly themselves.”⁸

“In order to give new ways of inter-professional co-operation the opportunity to develop, the existing borders between medical professions have to be softened up. This means that [...] existing traditional opinions have to be modified. [...] The running theme in focus of the international literature about skill-

mix is the transfer of tasks that used to be performed by doctors to the nursing personnel, be it by means of delegation, which means that the doctor is still legally responsible and liable, or by means of substitution, which means that legal responsibility will also be transferred to the nurse.”⁹

The inter-professional ideology is meant to be integrated into medical courses at the university by means of learning modules (see “Amendment of the medical professions bill, MedBG”, *Current Concerns* No 7 of 25.3.2014). There the medical student would be conditioned by means of role plays and other methods to pursue his or her integration into hierarchy-free teams, to transfer responsibilities (“the lead”, as it is called) to other team members and to “critically reflect his or her own competence together with practitioners of other health professions, as well as their aspirations, concerns and demands”.¹⁰

It needs to be emphasized: establishing a diagnosis and planning the treatment is the domain of a thoroughly trained and board-certified medical doctor and should be achieved in co-operation with the patient, regardless of any “aspirations of other practitioners”.

2. Seeing a doctor is meant to become more difficult

Officials in the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) plan for measures to make seeing a doctor more difficult:

“There is no automatic need for a patient to see a doctor at every visit. Patients with chronic diseases can be managed by specifically trained nurses or medical practice assistants.”¹¹

Physicians are supposed to surrender their responsibility for patient care and transfer important areas of medicine to health

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practitioners who are not professionally trained to perform them:

"Moreover, doctors need a re-definition of their relationship with patients, as a consequence of their being replaced by inter-professional teams in medical practice."¹²

Such a health care model is dangerous and certainly not what the Swiss people want. A good relationship between doctor and patient is part of the healing process and irreplaceable.

3. "Advanced Practice Nurses" (APN) meant to replace family doctors

Adapting old WHO models for developing countries ("primary health care"), general medical practitioners and family doctors are supposed to be replaced by nurses who would perform important medical tasks without the required scientific equipment. In Anglo-American and some Nordic countries the patient sees advanced practice nurses in several crucial health care situations. Already now, they manage for instance: "Primary contact and follow-up contacts for the entire patient population; primary contacts for urgent situations during or outside of office hours [i.e. emergency care! author's comment]; management of chronically ill patients"¹³

A preliminary draft for the Federal health professions law (GesBG) envisions the following tasks for these APN's :

- *"The advanced practice nurse (APN) orders tests in stable patients, interprets them, adjusts the medication and organizes other required therapies. [...]"*
- *The [...] APN takes the lead in inter-professional teams. [...]"*
- *The [...] APN answers professional questions as a consultant for teams and institutions, and suggests adjusted and efficient solutions to the patients (for instance 'nurse case management')."*
- *The [...] APN is responsible for quality standards being met in health care organizations and clinical guidelines and standards being set up, he or she contributes to malpractice management."¹⁴*

Contrary to what Federal Councillor Berset makes people believe, family medicine is not meant to be strengthened but medical emergencies, primary patient contacts, the prescription of drugs, answering professional questions, development of clinical guidelines and other things would no

"In the new models the family doctor is done away with and his or her functions are supposed to be fulfilled by other practitioners."

longer be performed by a board-certified medical doctor.

The arrogance and lack of respect for family doctors and nurses and what they do on a daily basis, as well as for the complaints of their patients, i.e. all of us citizens, is best illustrated by a quote of *Beat Sottas*, who is a member of the steering committee at *Careum*, where our Swiss nurses are trained (former *Stiftung Schwesternschule und Krankenhaus vom Roten Kreuz Zürich-Fluntern*) and of one of the leading think tanks promoting the Berset health reform plans: "The problem has been well-known for a long time: A great deal of what people do in medical family practices is 'bobology', the psychological treatment of adjustment difficulties, that means nursing care and social work. Anybody can do this, as the experienced health care manager *Bodenheimer*, among others, has pointed out, no medical training whatsoever is necessary for this sort of thing."¹⁵

4. Berset's counter-proposal ignores the will of the people

Just two years ago (17 June 2012) the Swiss people have overwhelmingly voted against the Managed Care draft with 76%. Despite this, Federal Councillor Berset keeps pursuing the very same integrated health care models together with the top managers of some medical organisations.

Summarizing from several position papers of the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), the *Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Public Health (GDK)* and of *Careum*, this is what a "future basic health care" would roughly look like:

The patient enters the health system via several different channels: the pharmacist, the APN, the self-employed specialist nurse or the family doctor. Whoever sees the patient first will continue to manage and "navigate" him or her through the health system. A call centre may provide additional help. "Transparency" is achieved by the electronic patient note which all collaborators in the inter-professional team have access to. A data confidentiality disaster of epic proportions in a health system in which medical data safety is meant to be "softened up" already from all sides! In Germany, there is already massive resistance

against the introduction of an electronic patient card.¹⁶

Under the slogan of "health competence" mainly patients with chronic diseases are supposed to manage their care themselves, for this self-help they are supposed to be trained with internet webinars and teaching courses in order to manage their future health crises and problems. Instead of paying a visit to the doctor, the patient provides his or her health data electronically to a central switchboard which issues medical advice via telephone or e-mail. The responsible caretakers have no choice but to strictly adhere to these guidelines, lacking the preconditions to make decisions about diagnoses and therapy themselves. In case of adverse events, a doctor can always be contacted in a video conference (unless it's already too late). For the better-to-do, the visionaries have something similar to the retail clinics in mind which already exist in the US, where the "informed patient" orders and purchases what he or she needs in super market chains or walk-in clinics: "In the USA such structures are already abundant. There the super market and pharmacy chains have started to offer health care services. They are oriented towards consumer needs, offer convenient opening hours, have a limited range of products for low fixed prices, and the nurses, nurse practitioners or physician assistants secure short waiting times. In most cases they offer telephone support and/or video conferences with doctors on duty."¹⁷

High quality in Swiss medical care is maintained due to the fact that the practitioner who knows the patient and his environment best, who has established a relationship of trust with the patient over years – the family doctor, that is – will make the diagnosis, suggest a suitable therapy and then decide who of the medical team will provide which aspect of the treatment.

Should we allow Mr Berset to introduce a third world concept called "primary health care" into highly developed Switzerland? If *Beat Richner* has succeeded even in Cambodia to establish and maintain an efficient health system modeled on Swiss quality standards, we should be able to do the same in wealthy Switzerland!

Anybody who agrees so far with our arguments for a good family medicine will think carefully how to vote on May 18th. Voting on the counter-proposal "Federal act on basic health care" is especially important because a whole lot of controversial bills is bound to follow as a consequence: Amendment of the law of medicinal professions, health professions law, the law on an electronic patient note, as well as a quality control institute and a

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health technology assessment (HTA) institute (agency to assess cost effectiveness).

How to deal with the doctors' shortage?

It is absolutely contradictory to use the shortage of doctors as an argument in favour of introducing disruptive reform and downgrading of our highly qualified, best-in-the-world health system while at the same time clinging to the numerus clausus which allows only 40% of those wanting to study medicine to actually do so.¹⁸

Therefore, instead of devaluing the medical profession even further, indulging in quality assessment and control obsession, and instead of further economizing medicine, the following measures could be considered:

1. abolish the numerus clausus and create more opportunities to study medicine
2. return the decision making competencies in health care to the medical profession
3. touch base again with all those well-known heroes of the medical tradition (*Hippokrates, Albert Schweitzer, Beat Richner, Eugen Bleuler, Rudolf Virchow*) in order to get a clear standpoint on our mission and pass it on to the younger generation
4. reduce unnecessary administrative, controlling and quality maintenance workload at once
5. reestablish the medical practitioner as an independent profession without further harassment by constant orders and guidelines.

This is similar in the nursing profession, who would also benefit a lot from a return to a decent, practice-oriented training and a liberation from overwhelming administrative, documentation and IT tasks. •

¹ Federal People's Initiative „Say yes to family medicine“: www.admin.ch/ch/d/pore/vi/vis374t.html

² www.bag.admin.ch/themen/berufe/13932/13933/14680/index.html?lang=de

³ *Faktenblatt medizinische Grundversorgung*. Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA), Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH), 24.2.2014

⁴ *Neue Versorgungsmodelle für die medizinische Grundversorgung*. Dialogue of national health policy, report of the working group "Neue Versorgungsmodelle für die Grundversorgung" by GDK (Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Public Health) and FOPH Berne, April 2012, pp. 8–16

⁵ Cf. *Botschaft des Bundesrates zur Änderung des Medizinalberufegesetzes (MedBG)*, 3 July 2013

⁶ *ibid.* p. 6216 and *Bericht der Themengruppe "Interprofessionalität"*, Dialogue of national health policy, FOPH, Liebefeld, 28.10.2013, p. 13

⁷ *ibid.* p. 9

⁸ *ibid.* p. 16

⁹ *Neue Versorgungsmodelle für die medizinische Grundversorgung*. Dialogue of national health policy, report of the working group "Neue Versorgungsmodelle für die Grundversorgung" by GDK (Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Public Health) and FOPH Berne, April 2012, p. 24

¹⁰ *Bericht der Themengruppe "Interprofessionalität"*, Dialogue of national health policy, FOPH, Liebefeld, 28.10.2013, p. 28

¹¹ *Bericht Neue Versorgungsmodelle*. Statement of Dr Stefan Spycher, FOPH, 2.4.2012, p. 1

¹² *Bericht der Themengruppe "Interprofessionalität"*. Dialogue of national health policy, FOPH, Liebefeld, 28.10.2013, p. 17

¹³ *Neue Versorgungsmodelle für die medizinische Grundversorgung*. Dialogue of national health policy, report of the working group «Neue Versorgungsmodelle für die Grundversorgung» by GDK (Swiss Conference of the Cantonal Ministers of Public Health) and FOPH Berne, April 2012, p. 25

¹⁴ Preliminary draft for a federal law about the health professions (GesBG), explanatory report from 13.12.2013, p. 38

¹⁵ Sottas B., "Interprofessionelle Arbeitsteilung in der Grundversorgung". *Care Management* 2012; 5: Nr. 5/6, pp. 17

¹⁶ cf. www.stoppt-die-e-card.de or sueddeutsche.de from 17 August 2012 15:24, "Widerstand gegen elektronische Gesundheitskarte – Datenschutzrechtlicher Dammbreach"

¹⁷ Sottas B., Brügger, S., *Ansprechstrukturen, Perspektivenwechsel und Grenzverschiebungen in der Grundversorgung*. Short version, p. 3, Careum 2012

¹⁸ According to *Aargauer Zeitung online* from 28.3.2014 there are 600 to 800 apprenticeship places available for 3300 Swiss high school graduates, who enroll for a medical study.

Further examples of new health care models from other countries*

Primary care practices in Germany

"Particularly, with respect to medical prevention (for example such as Patient training, or vaccinations) as well as long-term care for chronically ill persons (monitoring of various measurements), medical assistants or nurses can take on important tasks which are performed mostly by family doctors, today. Namely, monitoring of chronic diseases might also be conducted by medical assistants with the help of simple, highly structured and validated monitoring lists." [...] (pp 13f)

Multi-professional health care centers in Finland

"Within the health care centers there exists a registration and gatekeeper system. As a rule, the patients are first cared for by nursing professionals. The nurse carries out medical check ups, collects the necessary test results and decides whether a doctor has to be consulted." (p. 14)

Guided Care in the USA

"A specially trained Guided Care nurse [...] is responsible for 50 up to 60 chronically ill patients, finds out their needs, [...] monitors their health condition, and trains the patients to enable themselves." (p. 15)

Is that really what we want for the future of our integrated health care system? Just the thought of the possibility lets one freeze internally.

This will be something very, very quite different from our family medicine!

* *New supplying models for primary health care*. "Dialogue" National health policies, report from the working group "new supplying models for primary health care" by the Conference of Cantonal Health Directors and the Federal Office of Public Health, Berne, April 2012, p. 13.

(Translation Current Concerns)

Control of the healthcare system by Federal Councillor Berset and “his” FOPH (Federal Office of Public Health)?

The Swiss healthcare system must be in the hands of the Swiss cantons

by Dr iur Marianne Wüthrich

In the article: “No to the bluff package concerning the ‘Federal decision about primary healthcare’” (*Current Concerns* No 7 of 25 March) the great importance of a healthcare, organized in a federalistic manner for our population, was underlined: “In Switzerland the healthcare works very well, as does everything that has been established from the bottom to the top. The recipe for this kind of success is very simple: Direct democracy and federalism are the best means to organize a community solidly and sustainably. In the Swiss Confederation it is a matter of course that the healthcare as well as the school system are in the hand of the cantons. The subsidiary principle has been well-proved from 1848 until today. The Federal Government may step in only if the cantons are unable to fulfill their tasks. In Switzerland we feel repulsion towards a centralist government.”

Federalism is a cornerstone of the Swiss model

Switzerland has its historical roots in the alliance of the sovereign cantons from 1848, when it became the Swiss Confederation. Although a lot of time has passed by since then and the Swiss people have assigned many new competences to the Federation – competences that nobody had conceived of in the 19th century – the small-scale federalist structure of Switzerland is deeply integrated in our customs and our conscience. Thinking of the competences that we, the sovereign wisely delegated to the Confederation like the regulation of nuclear energy, the Swiss national roads, and the *Swiss railway* (SBB). It really made sense that the sovereign put these into the hands of the Federal Government. For example, the SBB is highly respected in the hearts and minds of the Swiss people as a federal institution per se. The same is true, however, for the small-scale regional federalist state structure of Switzerland, that is deeply rooted in our souls and minds.

Maybe one should – as was done with the legal anchoring of our permanent armed neutrality – conduct a survey in our Swiss population on the preservation of federalism. With certainty, an at least 90 per cent affirmative answer of the Swiss population for a strong position of the cantons could be expected.

The Swiss healthcare system has always been in the competence of the cantons. It is no question for anyone, the su-

pervision of the primary healthcare, as performed from doctors and hospitals, can’t be organized from Berne, but has to be carried out in a community-based manner by the sovereign. When debating the counter-proposal on primary healthcare the argument could be heard that the State itself always used to intervene with the field of health care. It should be emphasized: Of course has the state the right of supervising and inspecting the healthcare system, and of course does the state direct the majority of the hospitals. However, in Switzerland the state is the cantons! The cantons have the competences for these tasks, not the Federal Government.

The principle of federalism in the Federal Constitution

In the Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation the principle of federalism is formulated in a remarkable way:

Art. 3 Cantons

The Cantons are sovereign except to the extent that their sovereignty is limited by the Federal Constitution. They exercise all rights that are not assigned to the Confederation.

This means that not the Federation is to assign powers to the Cantons but it must be the other way round. Basically all competences are in the authority of the Cantons if they are not vested to the Confederation by those who create the Constitution, i.e. the Constitutional legislators, the people and the cantons. This principle is confirmed by following legal provision:

Art. 42 Duties of the Confederation

1 The Confederation shall fulfil the duties that are assigned to it by the Federal Constitution.

This means: The Confederation is only authorized to exercise those competences which the sovereign expressly assigns to it, all other capacities adhere to the Cantons.

During the long time since the foundation of the Federal State it has been proven that this is the best way to decide on solutions for the most upcoming problems, according to the diversity of the Cantons and communities. The best way means: in touch with the people, as little bureaucracy as possible and even financially the cheapest and most favour-

able. This corresponds to the principle of subsidiarity: a community solves all tasks it can cope with on its own before the Canton intervenes. The same must apply for the relationship between Canton and Federation. The principle of subsidiarity is also laid down in the Federal Constitution:

Art. 43a Principles for the allocation and fulfilment of state tasks

1 The Confederation only undertakes tasks that the Cantons are unable to perform or which require uniform regulation by the Confederation.

The principle of subsidiarity is not only an important result of federalism but also of direct democracy, because at the lower state levels, the canton and the community, the citizens can participate in the political process much more directly

Ensuring the preservation of Federalism

Constitutional legislator is the sovereign that is we citizens. We are responsible that fundamental issues of the community as the school and healthcare remain in the hands of the cantons.

Most recently certain circles in politics and administration have more and more intervened into the very essence of federalism and try to build up the federal administration to become a centralized machinery of power and governance which they expand to such an extent that a continuous weakening of the proven and very well-functioning federalist system is the result. Those who pursue the goal to integrate Switzerland more and more into the European Union and in a world of globalized big trusts have no use for a regional organisation with a lot of “veto-players” – that is the 26 cantonal parliaments and the sovereign in the 26 Cantons.

We as voters are called upon to ensure that federalism does not fall victim to the striving for centralization by some of our Federal Councillors and administrators. Once more, on 18 May we have the opportunity to say “No” to the bluff package “Federal decree on primary healthcare” which will relinquish our good federalist health system to be converted by the Federal Office of Public Health (FOPH) and its head Federal Councillor *Alain Berset*.

No army without an air force

Gripen: a useful purchase on favourable terms

The purchase of 22 new multi-role combat aircraft in replacement of 54 obsolete machines is necessary for the Army in order to continue fulfilling its civilian and military tasks. The funding of the project is guaranteed as part of the regular army budget within the next ten years. The return on investment will be significant for the Swiss companies.

Although this summer thousands of people will crowd in Payerne wanting to participate in the air show AIR 14, a part of the population seems to be convinced that a military plane is nothing but a useless toy. It would be desirable that this opinion may remain a minority one at the upcoming vote of 18 May and the credit for the purchase of 22 new aircraft of the type *Gripen E* will be approved to replace the 54 old *F-5 Tiger* from the seventies.

In September 2013 citizens spoke up in favour of maintaining the militia army

It is true, the risk of a war concerning Switzerland appears a small one; but the events in Ukraine and the Crimea show that peace can never be ultimately attained and that political tensions can sometimes quickly lead to military conflicts. If one day the hypothetical risk was to realize for Switzerland, it would certainly be too late to begin with the building up of defense forces. The citizens acknowledged that in the plebiscite in September 2013 by speaking out in favor of maintaining the militia army. The continued existence of a modern and efficient air force arises from the validity of this referendum: One does not conceive of an army without the military branch of an air force.

The tasks of the Air Force are manifold. In addition to the intrinsic air defense in case of conflict, there are also air-policing duties, which are perceived in time of peace to identify aircraft intruding the Swiss airspace, or, for example, to secure the airspace during international conferences. These deployments are ensured today as far as possible by about 30 *F-A/18* procured in the nineties. Given the time required after each flight for maintenance work on the ground, their num-

“The continued existence of a modern and efficient air force arises from the validity of this referendum: One does not conceive of an army without the military branch of an air force.”

ber may prove insufficient when multiple operations are necessary simultaneously, or a single event is prolonged. The veteran *F-5*, obsolete and technically outdated, cannot be used reasonably. The *Gripen* as a multi-role combat aircraft does not only the support of the *F-A/18* in their operations, but also covers the capabilities for aerial reconnaissance and of a ground attack aircraft – skills that the army has lost since the decommissioning of the former aircraft of the types *Hunter* and *Mirage*.

Part of the regular army budget

It is therefore incorrect to evoke the impression that the purchase of these machines is unnecessary, and that a fleet of total 54 aircraft represent an excessive luxury for a country like Switzerland.

Moreover, it is not right to criticize the financing by making the people believe that other issues, particularly in the social sector, will suffer from this purchase. The purchase sum of slightly more than three billion Swiss francs is ensured by a special fund in which 300 million francs per year are paid from the regular army budget. In other words, the purchase of the 22 *Gripen* is funded as part of the regular army budget, spread over ten years. The operating costs which are added by the opponents hoping to produce exorbitant figures depend on a different logic, but are financed from the regular budget of the army, as well.

Even if you include the operating costs, 300 million francs in ten years are moderate for a state that spends more than 60 billion Swiss francs year after year. You have to call to mind that the military bud-

et is the only one, absolutely the only one that has been cut systematically for 25 years or has stagnated, while all other federal spending exploded? Today, the army lacks financial resources to such an extent that, for example, the air traffic control can as a rule only be ensured during office hours. This fact is ridiculed by the opponents of the *Gripen*, whereas it is in reality only the – politically desired – result of the army opponents’ lobby.

An important return on investment

Finally, it should be recalled that the purchase of these aircraft brings work for the Swiss industry – as a supplier directly, or indirectly through barter transactions. The latter should amount to 2.5 billion francs according to the contract with the supplier. What is presented to us as net spending, in truth creates a significant return on investment in financial terms, as well as jobs and bases for technological know-how.

This background information has to be kept in mind at the moment of the vote, and not the half-truths and misinformation distributed by the army opponents in the media. The aim of this purchase must be to retain the most important conditions of our social life and economy in the medium to long-term: peace and security. The conditions under which the purchase can be realized are not only reasonable but also advantageous. We recommend to vote Yes. •

Source: *Centre Patronal* No 2072 from 2.4.2014

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“The purchase of the 22 *Gripen* is funded as part of the regular army budget.”

Press release

Thurgau women for a strong militia army, for the Gripen and for a save roof over Switzerland

With regard to the federal referendum of 18 May 2014 on the "Gripen Fund Act" Thurgau women from the entire canton have got together across party lines. They want a strong militia army with a strong air force, capable of protecting and especially defending the country and the people. The initial signers are Brigitte Häberli, CVP State Councillor, Verena Herzog, SVP National Councillor, Kristiane Vietze, FDP Cantonal Councillor, the Liberals and Dr phil Judith Barben, psychologist, scientific journalist and publisher. In a very short time, many other women signed the advertisement. Today, representatives of the Women's Committee presented their arguments in Frauenfeld.

Verena Herzog, SVP National Councillor, spoke about the topics of security and added value. She emphasised that each of them was grateful to have a save roof over his head, due to the Air Force. As a National Councillor, a trade woman, a mother and a citizen she too had her share in the responsibility for our country's security, she said. Therefore she advocated a properly functioning air raid protection by a modern equipped Air Force. Moreover, the "Gripen" constructors Saab and Sweden were reliable partners, she said. Furthermore Herzog underlined that the "Gripen" investment would only encumber the VBS (Ministry of Defense) budget and neither that of education, nor that of the social and health services, nor any other field. Quite the opposite, by the purchase of the "Gripen", compensation transactions amounting up to 2.5 billion francs would be procured for Switzerland as a center of industry. Many industrial companies in all parts of Switzerland would be able to conclude transactions of that kind with Sweden, and many components and parts of the "Gripen" were to be developed and manufactured in Switzerland. Furthermore, as Herzog said, there were plans for a close cooperation between Saab and the Pilatus company in Stans, providing contracts of half a billion Swiss francs to the Swiss company in the next five to eight years. Thus about 100 new jobs might be created. The Berne

company RUAG too wanted to participate in the international business for the maintenance of the "Gripen", which would in turn generate jobs to numerous small and medium-sized enterprises. Altogether, Switzerland as a center of industry would enormously benefit from the procurement of "Gripen" also with respect to know-how development. Security and greater independence granted by the purchase of the "Gripen" as well as secure jobs would not only be of benefit to us but also to future generations.

Dr phil Judith Barben, psychologist, scientific journalist and publisher, underlined that in the last twenty years the Swiss people had clearly expressed their preference of a militia army in twelve votes, i.e. of an army capable of protecting and especially of defending the country and its population. Switzerland, as a sovereign and neutral country, was also contractually bound to do so, because, in any case, the state monopoly on the use of force could not be delegated, Barben said. Next she pointed out that the aircraft, due to their technical qualities, were the only weapons capable of fending off unexpected and rapidly built up foreign threats from the air. Therefore, a well-functioning Air Force was essential for Switzerland's safety. It was – figuratively speaking – the "safe roof over the head" of the army, and thus also over Switzerland. Only if this roof was working, the army would be able to fulfill its mission on the ground.

An extensive and thorough evaluation had proven the fact that all three tested aircraft were very similar and technically excellent. Therefore primarily economic and political reasons had been the decisive factor for the preference of the "Gripen". The "Gripen" had the best cost-benefit ratio and by far the lowest procurement and operating costs. In addition, Sweden as the delivering country was a neutral country, just like Switzerland. The purchase price including armament, ammunition, logistics and related training systems amounts to 3.126 billion francs. Funding is provided by the ordinary budget of the Army over the period of ten years and will therefore cost 300 million francs per year. Barben demonstrated that the

costs will amount to 40 francs a year per inhabitant or 10 cents a day, and she emphasised: "For us – citizens of one of the richest countries in the world – our security should be worth this price!" That was why she hoped with all her heart that the voters on 18 May 2014 would vote *Yes to the "Gripen"*.

Kristiane Vietze, Cantonal Councillor, FDP, The Liberals, went deeper into the topic of "security". She said that security was the basis for peace, political stability, a successful business location and welfare. The respective vote was about nothing less than our country's security, the protection of the population and the maintenance of our independence and our neutrality.

A military attack on our country although it seems unlikely today, can nevertheless not be ruled out entirely for the future. Unfortunately, terrorist threats are a reality today. Therefore, we still must be on our guard and prepare well if we want to continue to live in peace and independence. Most of us even lock their apartments, although a professional would be able to break in anyway. Locking the door still means protection because thereby a potential burglar's or a thief's plan will be hampered and an amateur will be discouraged.

The speaker stressed the necessity to protect and defend our airspace in order to preserve the security of our country and she underlined: "If we want peace, we must be prepared for a possible attack."

It was known, she said, that our almost 40 years old "Tigers" had become "toothless" in the course of time and could no longer cope with today's technological possibilities. Due to a serious evaluation the experts of the Federation had concluded that the Gripen fulfilled our military requirements. We could rely on that. Therefore, she advocated with conviction a 'Yes' to Switzerland's security and a 'Yes' to the Gripen Fund Act. •

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Source: *Press release of the press conference on 3.4.2014. www.gripen-ja.ch*

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

“Giving priority to the human right to self-determination”

Interview with Professor Dr iur et phil Alfred de Zayas, Geneva



Alfred de Zayas
(picture thk)

thk. *The current world situation distinctly shows that enhanced efforts should be made in order to save future generations “from the scourge of war”, as it says in the preamble to the UN Charter. Professor Dr Alfred de Zayas is the United*

Nations “Independent Expert on the Promotion of a Democratic and Equitable International Order”. In the following interview he talks about his mandate, but also about burning issues of international law and policy.

Current Concerns: At the end of the spring 2014 session of the UN Human Rights Council several resolutions were adopted, including a resolution concerning your UN mandate. Are you satisfied with the result?

Professor Alfred de Zayas: The resolution on my mandate was adopted by a comfortable majority, albeit not by consensus, thus confirming and strengthening the previous Resolutions 18/6 and 21/9. Of course, it is unsatisfactory that there are still some states that remain skeptical on this important issue. The mandate is universal, it is a synthesis of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. In my reports to the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council, I have already shown this convergence and addressed numerous tasks envisaged by these resolutions. I would not say I fulfilled these tasks, because the subject matter is far too complex and demanding; but I have identified the challenges and formulated concrete and pragmatic proposals for the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council. I am already working on this year’s report for the Human Rights Council, which emphasizes the need for disarmament as a condition for the fulfillment of a peaceful and just international order, and a re-orientation of budget priorities away from military expenditures and toward the implementation of human rights imperatives.

How should we take the fact that not all countries unanimously support the peace efforts that are connected to your mandate?

From the start there was no consensus concerning my mandate, as there is no consensus on the mandate for International Solidarity or for resolutions on the right

to peace. One reason is the influence of the military-industrial complex and other lobbies in several countries, who promote higher military expenditures enabling them to continue doing business and making profit. They want to produce drones, aircraft, submarines etc.. They want ongoing conflicts, so that weapons are used on the ground so that new weapons can be produced and sold. They are merchants of death. Of course, this results in a world order of fear and instability instead of a world order that is more peaceful, more democratic and just. Let us hope that we will gradually manage to convince the skeptical states one by one, that my mandate brings “added value”, namely that it is beneficial for all. Western states want more democracy, more press freedom, more freedom of peaceful assembly and association. These processes are supported by my mandate.

On the other hand we want a world order that is more just. This means that poorer countries should not be exploited, that the riches of the world have to be distributed, that market speculation over harvests, commodities and resources must stop. We must help poor countries, because they have a right to development. We have to promote this right, which will only be possible if we reorient, if we disarm and invest the released funds in peaceful enterprises, social justice and all human rights, instead of wasting these funds in spying activities, warmongering, interventions and wars. My mandate is the absolute mandate of reconciliation. It is good for the North and for the South, for the West and for the East.

What would constitute a step towards greater peace and justice?

The states need to radically cut their expenses on the military. For this purpose, these expenses must be set out in a transparent and open manner, and the people must be consulted. Since 11 September 2001, the US (and not only them) have spent enormous amounts of money on armaments and so-called national security measures, but no one knows exactly how much money it was or what exactly will be done with the money. Prior to Edward Snowden, the population did not know that the US government was spying on us Americans; we did not know that our tax dollars were used for a global espionage action, including world leaders, UN officials, human rights defenders including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, etc. The NSA keeps around 35,000 people busy with that. We

do not have a democratic process here. The people should have been consulted. It is the government’s duty of pro-active information of matters of national concern. The population must have the opportunity to decide how their tax dollars are spent. Budgets must be publicly discussed, and if the private electronic mail of almost every citizen is searched, people should not only know this, but consent to it. It was an arbitrary measure of the Government, which was and remains unconstitutional, illegal and illegitimate. The so-called war against terrorism is no justification for trampling on human rights and destroying people’s privacy. We also want to know which weapons are bought and why we need them. The people must have a say, as is the case in Switzerland. Had a referendum on the NSA activities been held in America, 80% of the population would have disapproved of such surveillance. The population would never have agreed on spending taxpayers’ money on spying instead of devoting these funds to education hospitals and infrastructure.

Don’t we have a vast amount of money being spent on the North Atlantic military alliance?

Way too much and without justification. After all, pursuant to its mandate, NATO should only be used for defense and not for aggression. The member countries have obligations in NATO, and NATO expects each member state to invest a lot of money in armaments. Originally, it was a defensive alliance. It was founded after the Second World War in the wake of the Cold War as a bulwark against an expected expansion of communism to the west. At least since 1990/91 the old threat from the Soviet Union has become obsolete. The Warsaw Pact was dissolved, and the same could have been expected of NATO. However, NATO was not abolished, but even expanded. The military expenditures of NATO continue to grow and members are under political pressure to designate a more significant part of their budget for military expenditures. Now if the intention was to keep NATO operational and to create a so-called “peace-keeping force” consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations, other UN members should have been invited to join NATO, as for example Belarus, Russia, who otherwise would perhaps have good reason to feel threatened by NATO. So the alliance should in any case correspond more to the UN mem-

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bership and not be perceived and feared as an alliance of powerful Western European States geared against the rest of the world. Aggressive attitudes by NATO or any other military alliance may constitute a threat to international peace within the meaning of Article 39 of the UN Charter.

Is NATO still a defensive alliance?

In reality, it looks different. Ever since the war against Serbia in 1999, NATO also wages wars of aggression, either as an alliance or as in 2003 in a “coalition of the willing” against Iraq, a war that was described by UN Secretary General *Kofi Annan* and several experts in international law as illegal and incompatible with the UN Charter (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EitbzTAJWws>). The war against Libya in 2011 was also significantly waged by NATO.

All those billions that had been spent by NATO in these wars could have been dedicated to the fulfillment of the right to development. Thus poor countries could have been helped in many ways through technology transfer, training and infrastructure. The *Millennium Development Goals* could have long been achieved before 2015. The right to development could produce a lot of positive results in the future. In order to reap benefits in terms of peace, justice and international solidarity in the future, we must change the priorities and now deploy our forces and resources for world peace.

Why does this not happen?

Because the military-industrial complex has no interest in doing so. On the contrary. The weapons industry wants to continue making big profits. Hence taxes are being wasted on the design and manufacture of weapons, but also for the scrapping of the same. When I think of the old nuclear weapons, huge costs and huge risks are associated with them. In my report to the General Assembly I have again pointed out to the problem which *Mikhail Gorbachev* had already mentioned: the problem of a nuclear war, which does not develop from a specific threat, but simply because a human or technical error, an electronic or computer error, may occur that will not give the politicians enough time to see whether it is a “false alarm” or a real attack and whether a counter-reaction has already been triggered. These dangers must be banned to protect the whole of mankind.

To what extent is the disarmament also an obligation under international law?

Article 26 of the UN Charter provides for disarmament. Furthermore, Article 2 of the

International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 2 of the *Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* stipulate that all Parties must implement all human rights mentioned in these Covenants, which necessarily includes the obligations to disarm and to prevent war because otherwise they cannot guarantee the right to life and the right to a healthy environment provided for in these two Covenants. In this sense, the UN Conference on Disarmament and UNIDIR (*United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research*) were established in order to determine the modalities how best to meet these disarmament obligations.

Does this not collide with the right to self-defense?

No. Aggression is forbidden anyway. It is a matter for the United Nations and the Security Council to prevent aggression and to punish aggressors. But of course, every state has the right to self-defense as laid down in Article 51 of the UN Charter. Every State has the obligation to protect its citizens from attacks and threats from abroad. This is legitimate and belongs to the essence of each state. However, there is no right to “preemptive war”, only a right to defense in case an attack has taken place – and then only until the Security Council has been seized of the matter. Of course, defense and defense readiness are costly, but that does not mean that you spend further billions for nuclear weapons, which are constantly produced anew. We already have the ability to destroy the entire planet several times, which is an overkill, an insanity, a *Damocres sword* hanging over humanity, a total waste of resources. Such huge spending must be discussed in a transparent manner and at all levels of society. All facts belong on the table.

But by presenting the facts, the use of weapons is not yet banned.

That is right, the people must – as is the case here in Switzerland – decide and make their political leaders accountable when they are wasting taxpayers’ money. This is the only way to achieve more peace and justice. The people must have the right to initiate legislation, the right to challenge legislation by way of referenda, and the right to recall its representatives when they are acting arbitrarily and not representing the will of the population.

That would of course be a very important step.

The problem of so-called lobby democracies is that this unelected power bundle, namely the military-industrial complex, exerts direct influence on the senators and congressmen. Decisions are then taken in Congress that have not been dis-

cussed in any way with the population and are thus made over the heads of the people. This must be addressed urgently if we strive for a world order that is democratic and just.

Does this not include the peoples’ right to self-determination?

The world order is based both on the sovereignty of states and the peoples’ right to self-determination. Self-determination is a right that is recognized by most experts in international law as *jus cogens* or as peremptory international law. Article 1 of the *Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* and Article 1 of the *Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* consider the peoples’ right to self-determination one of the inalienable rights of the world order.

Does not everyone agree on that?

Just like in real life, there are also competing rights and interests in international law. For the stability of the world order we also want to have stable state borders. Through diplomacy and negotiations we want to provide a stable world order that respects the borders of states. If there is chaos or anarchy in a country, the stability has already been broken. Then there are often complex efforts to alter borders. A classic example is a country with parts of the population feeling unfairly treated, discriminated against or unrepresented. They often hope for more autonomy or secession.

What would be a concrete example from history?

Consider the situation in Yugoslavia in 1990/91. This was a state entity that imploded because the populations of Slovenia, Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and finally those from Kosovo sought independence. Until that time self-determination had mostly been discussed in the context of decolonization in Africa and Asia, but not by secession movements in European countries.

That means that a new international law emerged?

In a certain sense, yes. International law is dynamic, it is a living and evolving legal system. If there are developments such as the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1990/91, when the individual republics declared themselves independent, this is certainly in line with the principle of self-determination. Of course, the secession of Slovenes, Croats or Bosnians destroyed the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, but it corresponded to the right of self-determination. In the competing interests of territorial integrity ver-

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self-determination, priority is often given to the human right to self-determination.

How should we assess this development in terms of international law?

The territorial integrity must not be maintained by hook and crook. It is something that is not absolute or eternal. However, changes are to be brought about through peaceful means and negotiations.

If we transfer this now to the situation in Ukraine, what does that mean?

Here we have the case in which a democratically elected government was threatened by violent demonstrators and finally overthrown by a coup. First, the government has the right to internally resolve the situation peacefully and in negotiations. This happened in part. The Yanukovich administration showed a degree of flexibility and a readiness to negotiate with the protesters, who partly acted violently and received support from abroad. Unfortunately, several states have massively interfered, which also violated principles of international law.

What are you thinking of?

The bugged conversation of the Assistant Secretary of European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland with the American ambassador to Ukraine eloquently illustrated a “culture of interference” in internal affairs of other states. If the other states had respected Ukraine’s right to self-determination and had left the negotiations to the Ukrainians themselves, the whole thing would probably have developed differently.

Was the Yanukovich administration willing to compromise?

On 21 February, the foreign ministers of France, Poland and Germany met Yanukovich and the representatives of the insurgents, the so-called opposition. They agreed on a common roadmap. It was reasonable and provided snap elections and a gradual transition. The agreement should have been respected by all sides in accordance with Article 26 of the *Vienna Convention*. First and foremost by those states that had signed the agreement: Germany, Poland and France, but also by Yanukovich and the opposition.

Who broke the contract?

Definitely the opposition. The President had to flee the country at the risk of his life. This was a putsch, a Coup d’état, lacking legality or legitimacy. Unfortunately, this international agreement was not respected by the signatory states. In-

stead of requiring fulfillment of the agreement and supporting the democratically elected President, the western states gave recognition to the opposition, who had broken the treaty. This is a very abnormal situation and provides a devastating precedent of interventionism in the internal affairs of an independent state.

What does this mean for a country when a democratically elected president is overthrown?

Parts of the population feel of course uneasy. Especially those who already possessed a certain degree of autonomy in the country and, as in the case of Crimea, had their own parliaments. People have asked the question how things will continue. The representative of the population in the Crimea have decided that in this situation, in which the Russian population in the region was threatened by the new rulers, their own safety had priority. They did not want to cooperate with these rebels, and they declared themselves independent.

That was also the case in Kosovo?

There was only a declaration of independence by the Parliament. This declaration of the Parliament of 17 February 2008 did not violate international law as the *International Court of Justice* ruled in an Advisory Opinion of 2010.

Was there a referendum in Kosovo?

No, it was a declaration of independence by the Parliament, which was immediately recognized by the United States and several European countries. There are now 108 countries that have recognized Kosovo. However, this is not in line with the Security Council Resolution 1244, which establishes Kosovo as part of the former rest of Yugoslavia and/or Serbia and whose territorial integrity was to be respected. Notwithstanding this Security Council Resolution, Serbia was dismembered and the world accepted that.

Why was that?

The right to self-determination was given priority and placed above Serbia’s territorial integrity. This did necessarily and automatically have consequences for international law. That it was possible in Kosovo to secede as part of a nation-state without a referendum, only pursuant to a decision by a regional Parliament, without approval of the national Parliament, means that this will also be possible in other parts of the world. Thus, the principle of territorial integrity of states is not absolute.

What happened now in the Crimea?

According to the available information, the decision of Parliament was taken vol-

untarily and without military pressure from abroad. The plebiscite took place in a peaceful manner and with a huge turnout. About 83% went to vote and 96% voted for the independence of the Crimea and opted for the reintegration into Russia. In this situation, you have to say that, based on the precedent of Kosovo, this event has a higher democratic legitimacy, because the population was asked. Of course there will be international lawyers who say it is illegitimate. But the majority of international lawyers will agree that it was in accordance with the principle of self-determination and with international law.

In this matter, you are, however, in contradiction to your President.

It is embarrassing that when you have no facts, some people invent them. In Brussels, my President claimed that the actions in Kosovo were legal and those in the Crimea were illegal and that there had been a referendum in Kosovo, which was then accepted by the world community. We all know there was no referendum in Kosovo. Yet a fait accompli has been created. I do not think that the situation in Kosovo can be changed. I am just saying that in Kosovo a precedent was created which has had consequences and will continue to have consequences. This is not only of importance for the Crimea, but also for South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh. We can hardly imagine that the clock can be turned back. This would constitute a threat to international peace within the meaning of Article 39 of the UN Charter and beyond that would be undemocratic and against the will of the people in these countries.

To what extent are other ethnic groups affected?

For example, the population in Corsica, in Catalonia, the Kurds, the Tamils, the Ibos of Biafra (Nigeria), the Moluccans, the West Papuans and several other ethnic groups who seek independence.

What is there to do in this situation ?

My suggestion is to negotiate in accordance with the UN Charter, to discuss and to find ways of peaceful coexistence. This can all be done, provided that we work in good faith and are willing to find a peaceful solution. Finally, all UN Member States are obliged in accordance with Article 2, paragraph 3 of the Charter to “settle their international disputes by peaceful means, in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered”. So there is a commitment to negotiation, which would

“Passive neutrality’ and offering the good services – a guarantor of success”

Interview with National Councillor Roland Rino Büchel, member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council, Swiss People’s Party, canton of St. Gallen



Roland Rino Büchel
(picture admin.ch)

Current Concerns: At the end of March the Federal Council decided not to use any sanctions against Russia, thus not joining the EU. How do you judge this step?

National Councillor Roland Büchel: This corresponds to the opinion of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

There was never a motion for sanctions against Russia. Nevertheless: The measures which we must support within the scope of the Schengen Agreement are not simply nothing. However, these entry barriers cannot be called hard sanctions, that is true. The fact that the Federal Council has not decided any such measures, is gratifying.

The fact that we have to back the Schengen sanctions, is, however, a restriction of the sovereignty?

I think so, as well. Due to the agreement we have to participate. This is a loss of sovereignty.

How do you judge the situation for Switzerland?

Let us compare the political parties. The SVP interprets the neutrality concept very strictly. The further you move left, the more softened it is interpreted. Of course, this can be felt in the commission work as well. The vice president of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Council of States, SP president *Christian Levrat*, got into a fret recently. For him, Switzerland would

have had to impose sanctions if Switzerland had not currently chaired the OSCE. Is this neutral for you? For me it is not.

It is astonishing that in the end they join all those who are responsible for the whole upheaval in the Ukraine. Which role should Switzerland take here?

Our role must be neutral in the real and classical sense. We do not need a form of neutrality that leans on the EU. There it is about power and particular interests. This is legitimate, but it is not neutral.

With regard to the Kosovo Switzerland has recognised the independence relatively fast. With the Crimea one condemns this step. Why?

The explanation of the FDFA (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs) head says that Kosovo has argued 10 years about this question, while with the Crimea it lasted only about 10 days until the decision was taken. One points to the time factor as a justification.

How do you see this? Is time a factor in this context?

Of course 10 “visible” days are short for decision-making. Federal democracy standards were certainly not applied. Still: It is vital what people want. And they have spoken up clearly.

How do you see Russia’s role of the whole development?

The Winter Olympics have inhibited Russia and *Putin* for some time. During this period the European side has obviously helped to bring forward things in their

sense on the Kiev. However, after “Sochi” *Putin* has used his possibilities resolutely. With his acting very quickly he succeeded in creating the facts we have today.

For Switzerland it is clear that one will cooperate further.

Not for everybody in the country. Let us take as a little example the special stamp of the Swiss post on the occasion of the 200-year-old jubilee of the diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Russia. Different members of the National Council said publicly that one must not issue the stamp now that was launched long ago. You see, we have once more touched a strange interpretation of the neutrality concept.

How do you understand this?

If one has dealt with each other for so long, there have been better and worse times. Switzerland has maintained the relations with Russia in times that were considerably worse – the people were considerably less free then, than they are today.

How about neutrality concerning the role of the OSCE?

This chairmanship must lead to more neutrality and not to less. Neither to an “active neutrality” as, it has been demanded by the Left over and over again. For me a “passive neutrality” while offering the good services is a guarantor of success – and not politicising and wagging one’s finger. Besides, we should not overestimate the OSCE, nor should we get so

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also make sense for the general situation in Ukraine.

That is, it would take an honest dialogue here.

Yes, the sincere and honest dialogue. One cannot force another state by threats or unilateral sanctions to do something it does not want and what the people of the country concerned do not want. I am optimistic that the situation will calm down, I do not believe that is a threat to the Baltic States. I rather see, and that is a cause for concern, that warmongering is going on, which is led by massmedia. This warmongering also means a threat to the peace

within the meaning of Article 39 of the UN Charter.

Does warmongering not contradict international law?

Yes, it does. It is a violation of Article 20 of the *Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. Article 20 prohibits warmongering and war propaganda. It is regrettable that many media currently are actively engaged in such propaganda and painting the devil on the wall. They create an artificial sense of insecurity, drive the people to panic. They demonize the Russian government and the person of *Putin*, even though he has repeatedly proposed an international conference and repeatedly called for dialogue. We are bound by the UN Charter to resolve all differences through peace-

ful means. This is also the objective of my mandate: to achieve more peace and justice via an honest and sincere dialogue. There is no other way; history has already proven that a hundred times.

I would hope that in the coming years, consensus will be achieved over my mandate and that the skeptics will finally be convinced that a peaceful, democratic and just world order is still possible.

Professor de Zayas, thanks for this honest exchange of views.

(Interview: Thomas Kaiser)

The conversation expresses the personal opinion of Professor de Zayas and was not officially held in his capacity as Special Rapporteur.

cf. www.alfreddezayas.com and <http://dezazay-salfred.wordpress.com>.

What can the citizen do in the conflict between the “West” and Russia?

by Karl Müller

A look at the comments regarding Ukraine, Russia and the “West” in recent weeks has shown once again that there are big differences between the published opinion and the opinion of the citizens. There are many signs that the Western campaign journalism against Russian policy and in particular against the Russian President was too obvious and did not hold any credibility. The comments and reports were all too one-sided and unbalanced and hid too many facts, however, in many cases citizens are aware of them.

How the political debate will continue, cannot be predicted at this point. Nor can it be said with certainty here, what tactics and strategies will be pursued in the coming weeks and months and what all this will boil down to; what is thought up in the government-related think tanks and formulated into concepts, what plans have already been made, plans we are not informed about. How try which influence groups to influence what tactics we face as citizens – is beyond the knowledge of most people so far and is probably indicative of a historical process in which the main actors are right in the middle and pursue very different goals.

Must the citizen therefore simply stand and watch? No, he doesn't.

Excerpt from a letter to the editor, published on 17th of March in the “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung”: The reader refers to a cover picture of the newspaper, showing different insignias and carrying the following caption: “Odds and ends: Insignias on the Simferopol market from the Soviet era, when for *Putin* the world was still in order.” Among other things he writes: “I did not have to ask what the German-understanding Russians would feel looking at this picture – outrage, anger, or worse. The names on the insignias are unknown to Germans, and they mean nothing to them. In contrast to the Russians: The name *Nakhimov*, the legendary Admiral during the Crimean War (1853–1856);

Borodino, the Russian village, where the Russians Napoleon taught to fear; *Bogdan Khmelnytsky*, the Cossack, who integrated the Ukraine in 1654 into the Russian Empire, but also the acronym CCCP, the famous aircraft and the famous warship – all these are names that are familiar to every Russian and are sacred, as sacred as the names *Blücher*, *Wallenstein*, *Königsgrätz* (Hradec Králové), *St. Paul's Church*, *Freiherr von Stein*, *Scharnhorst*, *Humboldt* are for Germans. The names on your cover picture still form focal points of Russian national identity [...]. With contempt of Russian sanctuaries we contribute our part to make the gap between us and the Russians even deeper.”

The letter writer has a Russian given name, and therefore you cannot blame him, that he overestimated the awareness of what is valuable in history, especially in Germany. If you ask passers-by on a street in West Germany about the names and places mentioned by him, so probably most wouldn't know anything about. Just one example: But they still exist, German professors that point with scientific precision and passion on personalities in German history, who are worthwhile to remember. *Klaus Hornung* is one of such scientists. He has once again reminded in its third edition and with a new publisher at the time and to the life and work of *Gerhard von Scharnhorst*.^{*} So far, the new edition remained without attention. It is hushed up. It is said: Nowadays nobody is interested in that anymore. That's the way how we Germans deal with the best in our history and sciences. By the way.

Or maybe not only by the way. Perhaps is the own mental lack of history one reason why we Germans, we in the “West”, aren't able anymore to raise empathy for

^{*} The second edition of the book was discussed in detail in *Current Concerns*, No 3, from 17.1.2012 (<http://www.zeit-fragen.ch/index.php?id=618>).



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the distinct cultural and historical awareness of other countries and peoples. This can have fatal consequences in situations like the current one.

Some of you might remember his history lessons and the war propaganda of all sides before and at the beginning of World War I. In Germany there was a picture with the title “Comparative overview of the size of the meanness of our enemies.” The greatest person was a Russian soldier with sword, gun, fur hat and a bottle of vodka in his hand. That was in 1914. 52 years later before the semi-final match at the Football World Cup in England: Since the Germans played against the Soviet team and in the German “Bild-Zeitung” there was the headline: “Even the Ivan can be defeated.” Prejudices run deep and are constantly carried on. What should this be good for?

In the television broadcast of the *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* “Tough but fair” from the 17th of March, a Russian journalist, who was confronted with a ripped out quote from a speech of the Russian President, replied that it made little sense to present a ripped out of context quote that nothing says about the actual thinking of the President. The host of the program interrupted him immediately: “We're doing this not like the Pravda earlier, that we quote Russian politician speeches page

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hung up on its role, nor should we give it a meaning which it hasn't had for a long time, now.

How is the role of the special envoy of the Federal Councillor Tim Guldemann?

He has lately expressed himself negatively about our country several times, for ex-

ample, in the “Volkshaus” of Zurich, the stronghold of the socialists. Besides, he is a fervid EU fan. Even if ambassador *Guldemann* was really as good as he is presented in the media over and over again, one question remains: Can he and does he want to play his role in a really neutral manner? If our representatives do not identify with Switzerland and furthermore, if they side publicly in such a way, their credibility will be quickly spoilt for the side of the opposing parties.

To sum up one can say that Switzerland has to play its role as a neutral state and can try by means of its good services to offer negotiations to the different parties in order to achieve a peaceful solution.

This would be the behaviour of the neutral state that takes an adequate position based on the circumstances.

Mr Büchel, thank you very much for this conversation.

(Interview: Thomas Kaiser)

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upon page." What is the purpose of that polemic?

The well-known journalist and author *Peter Scholl-Latour* wrote: "We live in an age of mass dementia, particularly the medial mass dementia. If you look at how one-sided the media her is reporting on the events in Ukraine, from 'taz' to 'Welt', then you can really report about a disinformation on a large scale. "*Erhard Eppler*, the grand old man of the SPD, has written: "the West should not demonize Vladimir Putin, but try to understand his behaviour in the Ukraine crisis. No Russian president would patiently watch as a clearly anti-Russian government in Kiev tries to lead Ukraine into NATO direction. In the Ukrainian government are sitting right-wing radicals now. No-one is talking about this in Germany."

This has been recognized by many citizens. But there is more. Actually, every citizen in a democracy and in a world that has grown together so much, has the task to bear in mind his own history and culture, the values of his country and the people in his country, but then also to understand other peoples and cultures on the basis of his own solid foundation. This requires education, which nowadays is degraded selectively. Again, the question: What is it good for?

I'm not to blame, if I as a citizen know very little about a country like Russia yet. How was I to know it, if no one in the mass media and hardly any-

one in our schools and colleges is keen to help.

But still I can do something now. I can pause and be careful, as soon as I only feel the breath of a lack of objectivity. And you can feel it! And I can take the

intention to begin with the study. I don't let it happen, that new fronts and enemy images are constructed in this world and that the access to other cultures, to the history and the values of other peoples, to other people is blocked. •

"The US is currently making a strong effort to forge an American block"

km. Besides Professor *Eberhard Hamer* from the "Mittelstandsinstitut Niedersachsen" (SMEs Institute of Lower Saxony), economist and financial scientist Professor *Max Otte* from Worms was one of the few German economists who had predicted the financial crisis and the 2008 crash. Equally interesting is his answer to the question who in the world has an interest in a conflict with Russia and in the formation of a new block like in the days of the Cold War. In an interview with the *Deutschlandfunk* on 21 March 2014, Max Otte commented as follows:

"The Crimea has been ancient Russian territory. After the disintegration of the CIS countries it became, of course, part of Ukraine. But the situation there is much, much more complex, and Russia is slowly being encircled, and for a long time there have been attempts in the West to keep Russia out of the West and Europe. [...]"

This block formation has been going on for a while, and what we are witnessing now is a further tightening of block formation and that cannot be good for the world economy. [...]"

The US is currently making a strong effort to forge an American block and is trying to quasi-adjust Europe to the

US, and to adapt the European financial system to that of the US. A new block formation is being pursued quite strongly.

[...] In the past centuries of capitalism, financial markets have always followed the financial centers, and in the financial centers there are the particularly powerful financial houses [...] which have the greatest say, and this is where a certain communication power as well as certain decision-making power concentrate. These abstract financial markets would need a bit of disaggregation and a closer look at how the mechanisms operate and where exactly decisions are being taken." Max Otte is further asked by the interviewer if Germany was losing anything if it was too much falling into line with Washington or the financial markets in New York? His answer: "We have been doing this already for some time, and we have also been losing all the time. [...] In Germany, as indeed in the whole of continental Europe, we used to have a slightly differently structured financial system, a credit-based system that helped us very much for 150 years, and this is what we are giving up by giant strides, and that's not necessarily only to our advantage."

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“Authorities” in Kiev reject federalism and language rights Kiev “administration” prefers to flirt with NATO

by James George Jatras, Deputy Director of the American Institute in Ukraine, AIU

In the not-too-distant past, “federalism” was not a dirty word in Ukrainian politics, even from a western-oriented, nationalist perspective. For example, Professor *Alexander J. Motyl* of Rutgers University [New Jersey], a frequent commentator on Ukrainian affairs, last year made some thoughtful suggestions why decentralization made sense, especially in combating corruption (as AIU commented at the time, see “Decentralizing Ukraine: an Issue that Deserves Serious Discussion,” August 2013).

Now, however, western governments view the prospect of federalism as just a ploy to break up Ukraine. Secretary of State *John Kerry* has deferred the question of federalism to the unelected Kiev “administration,” which the US and Europe [the EU, editor’s note] uncritically accepted as the legitimate government and the authoritative collective voice of all of Ukraine’s people. Their rant is unsurprising:

“Why does Russia not introduce federalism ... Why does it not give more powers to national regions of the (Russian) Federation ... Why does it not introduce state languages, other than Russian, including Ukrainian, which is spoken by millions of Russians?” [...]

“There’s no need to preach to others. It’s better to put things in order in your own house,” [Reuters, “Ukraine hits back at proposals by Russia’s Lavrov,” March 31, 2014]

Of course, the Russian Federation does in fact have a functional federal structure. Under Article 68 of the Russian Constitution, subjects of the federation have the right to adopt state languages, which is

more than Ukrainian oblasts [term for a larger administrative district, editor’s note] can do. There are dozens of republican official languages, in fact including Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar, as well other languages with official status. Conversely, since no language other than Russian is in general, nationwide usage, it is the only state language on the entire territory of the federation.

This is in sharp contrast to Ukraine, where Ukrainian-Russian bilingualism is a fact of daily life in much if not most of the country, but Article 10 of Ukraine’s constitution declares absurdly that Russian is the language only of a “national minority.” If and when Ukraine decides to take a hard look at federalism, the fact of Ukraine’s functional bilingualism needs to be given a more realistic legal framework that promotes unity, not disunity, benefitting from the experience of other bilingual or multilingual countries.

One way to do that would be in the form of a national accord that defines the roles of Ukrainian and Russian as national languages in a federalized constitutional structure. In addition, Kiev’s performance under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages remains inadequate with respect to truly minority languages like Romanian, Bulgarian, or Gagauz – or Rusyn, which Kiev refuses to recognize at all, even though it is protected as an official minority language in Slovakia, Serbia, Romania, and elsewhere.

The harsh and misplaced response of the Kiev “administration” in rejecting even a discussion of federalism and language rights can only lead to further weakening of Ukraine’s cohesion, not its strengthening. Unfortunately, it’s clear where the Kiev “administration” is placing its priorities: on its geopolitical and military-strategic agenda. Yesterday [on April 1], the NATO-Ukraine Commission issued a statement that included (presumably not intended as an April Fool’s joke):

“We welcome Ukraine’s signature of the political chapters of the Association Agreement with the European Union on 21 March.”

One would think that the “political chapters” in an agreement with a com-

pletely different organization – the European Union – would be none of NATO’s concern. But of course it is very much NATO’s business, as the agreement signed on March 21 obligates Kiev to harmonize its foreign and security policies with Brussels, which in turn is subordinated to NATO under the 2002 “Berlin Plus” agreement.

Continued misplacement of priorities by western governments in their determined support for the unrepresentative and unelected Kiev “administration” can only threaten Ukraine’s already fragile unity. •

Source: AIU, 3 April 2014

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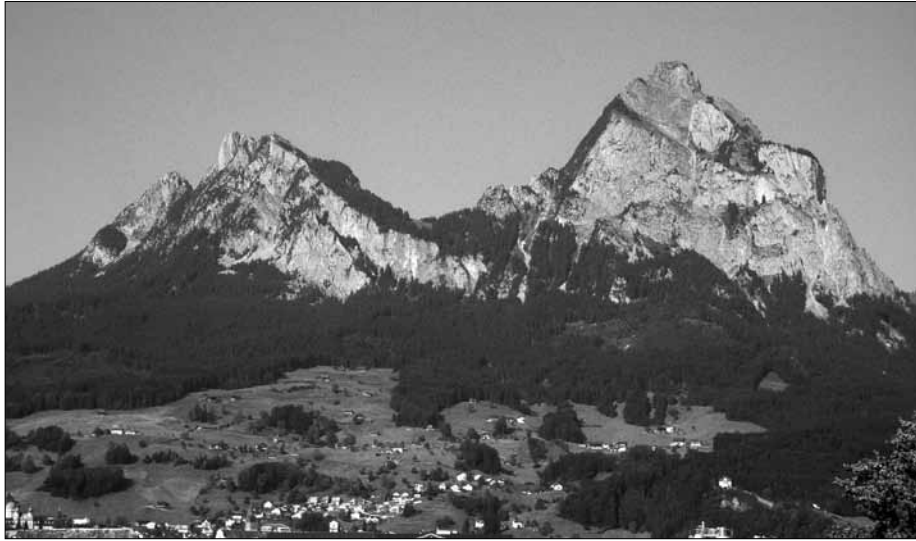
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The other “haute” cuisine

The innkeeper of the Mythen, free from giddiness

by Heini Hofmann



The magic “Grosser Mythen”, the “Matterhorn of the mountain hikers”, in the heart of Switzerland. (picture Heini Hofmann)



Whether sunny, whether foggy: The walk up to the “Matterhorn of the mountain hikers” is always worth it! (picture Heini Hofmann)

They call this magic, freestanding mountain in the heart of Switzerland the “Matterhorn of the mountain hikers”. Together with its smaller brother, it dominates the wall painting in the National Council Hall. Where others boast of “top of Switzerland”, they are satisfied with “top of Schwyz” here. On the steep peak of the “Grosser Mythen” (the “Kleiner Mythen” aside is a climbing mountain) there is a small guest house for which they are looking for a “host free from giddiness”.

However, here on top of the mountain it is not enough to be just efficient. To run a mountain peek restaurant – nota bene without a cable car for delivery – is an organizational challenge, also because the expectations of the mountain hikers has increased in the course of time. To lead this unique, eagle’s-nest-like mountain pub is charming and demanding at the same time. A tenant must have no wimps like requesting a warm-water shower or head-way parkers. Head for heights, but also staying power, agility and improvisational talents are demanded.

Giddy dream job

It is already in the seventh year, that *Burkhard “Eggi” Eggenberger* celebrates the giddy dream job as the summit host on the “Grosser Mythen” – a special kind of challenge! It just fell into the lap of the learned cook, all-rounder and globe-trotter: “Wanted: Innkeeper with a head for heights” was the text of a newspaper advertisement that he answered just for fun and – to his own astonishment – was immediately accepted as a “citizen of Zurich” with roots in the Rhine Valley and residing in the canton of Aargau, even be-

fore he could inform his wife that from now on he would be “up there” from May until the beginning of November ...

A mountain shelter is not easy to lead. This is revealed already in spring with the preparations. The official way is still not accessible. To first clear the hut and the helicopter landing area of snow, the staff must work themselves up vertically at a steel cable laid out on the northern side. Then, a team must secure – in some places with chains – the 2,500 meter steep zigzag path with its 46 hairpin bends and a difference in altitude of almost 500 meter between the starting point Holzegg (1,405 m) and the Mythen-Summit (1,899 m/6,227 ft.).

Mountain companions network

If you want to open the service on Mother’s Day, this means two to three weeks of preparatory work: The house will be subjected to a general cleaning; kitchen, pantry and water tanks must be “reloaded”. During the season a helicopter supply flight takes place every two months, a large supply, due to the thermals in the morning or evening. Wind, weather and view have to cooperate. The decision is always made at short notice via cell phone contact. Only when the pilot gives the okay, the ice cream is rapidly purchased ...

60 tons per season are flown up costing about 20,000 francs, and – quite amazing – additionally 6 tons gratis on shoulders and the waste carried down by the kitchen staff and volunteers. This works only thanks to a large network of friends and faithful souls, real mountain companions. In this case the management doesn’t work with business plans and meetings but with great commitment and common sense of

all and everybody can rely on each other. Is that the reason why they have so much fun? Also the interaction with the guests is casual. One asks for fresh milk, you don’t hear “we haven’t got it”, instead: “have you ever seen a cow up here?”

Travelled and experienced

The tall, athletic Eggi as the tenant is called, is in his mid-fifties radiating with his mischievous-serious face, sweatshirt and apron tied on, appears like a rock in the surf of the hustle and bustle. Life has taught him flexibility and improvisation. After his apprenticeship in the restaurant Franciskaner in Zurich and a commercial school, he has worked in restaurants on five continents for many years, led various restaurants in Zurich, winter stations for skiers as well as the party boat MS Meos on the Lake of Zurich. He now benefits from this wealth of experience, but also from his network and the fact that he is a professional.

Running a restaurant on the Mythen summit requires a little general staff exercise every day, and the working day is long. Early in the morning dozens of athletes who train on the mountain, but also sunrise worshipers who have maybe stayed even overnight (in three small double rooms) are arriving. During the day there are the mountaineers and in the evening until dusk the athletes again. The main factor is the weather: If the sun is shining, guests are pouring in, when it pours down, not a soul. In the former case, one must be

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"The other 'haute' cuisine"

continued from page 14

flexible and cook potatoes and pasta in advance to cope with the rush.

Top of Schwyz oblige

Tenant Eggenberg who formerly worked in upscale establishments wants to offer great class on the Mythen as well. Haute Cuisine in a double sense. "Sausages and sandwiches", he says "is what people have in their backpack. Also canned soups and ravioli are not my style." He uses fresh products from the region, lettuce instead of canned salad, fresh instead of frozen meat, butter and cheese from neighboring Alps. Also the traditional soups are freshly prepared. The deer season is popular with venison and chamois pepper. Or his specialties like "Snowflake coffee".

And he is very flexible: operating from sunrise to sunset, it may happen that someone orders a cordon bleu at six o'clock in the morning – and of course he will get it. "Kitchen closed" doesn't exist up here. Work is fun, and satisfied guests make you happy. However, the zenith is the peak-formed croissant on the peak: his nut and almond croissants reputation is so special, that it happens that mobile orders arrive from the Valley with the request to give them to a descending mountain hiker ... He sells about 10,000 pieces a year, "all fresh from the oven, none older than two hours".

Spartan kitchen technology

In most cases they work the three of them: Eggi, the chief, his associate *Roland Hirzel* and the legendary 100-club-

member *Armin Schelbert*. The small kitchen provides two gas cookers with 10 burners and two ovens. Electricity is not available up here. For that reason there are no fries on the menu, because electrical ventilation would be necessary in order to prevent a greasing of the mountain cabin. The autonomous solar electricity provides just enough power for cooler and air circulation. Within longer periods of poor weather wind electricity helps to fill the gap or in the worst case the generator.

Meteoric water gets processed for kitchen (6,000 l) and WC installation (4,000 l). Additional water must be brought by helicopter which costs 1 Fr. per litre. To flush a toilet once needs 4 litres. Considering this it is difficult to imagine that occasionally visitors get worked up about paying 1 Fr. for the smallest room, mostly the same that also take a seat at tables reserved for guests, leaving their own litter instead of taking it with them. But in the whole those who walk on mountains without using a mountain railway are friendly cheerful souls who respect mountain rules.

Difficult moments

Besides many nice moments the host of this exposed mountain cabin has also experienced quite difficult ones. One example was on 1st August 2010, when the 1st August celebrations had to be cancelled because of a severe weather warning. He stayed in the cabin, the lightning struck in it – and he survived only with plenty of luck. Mountains like highways claim their victims. On the occasion of the path's ceremonial opening already in 1864 one member fell to death at the Grosser

Mythen. Due to the statistic from 1919 to 1938 another 26 died (precipice: 21; rock fall: 2, lightning: 2; cardiac arrest: 1). Today, so the cabin host, an average of three people die per year (2 precipices and 1 heart attack). These are again and again difficult moments, which trouble him.

In former times the so called "Totenplangg" in the upper part was notorious. In 1941, a soldier fell at this difficult part of the path – in spite of a warning sign – picking flowers. But the demand for capture-railings by the highest army level was refused, because "to every considerate person it should be clear, that the warning sign is not only for advertising purposes". Only in 1907, a hundred years after the Mythen-Association's founding, the dangerous part of the climbing had been moved away so that the "Totenplagg" could be avoided. Today the path to the alpine cabin, which about 40,000 visitors climb every year, is exemplary maintained and secured. It is even accessible with children (attached to a rope).

Further information: www.grosser-mythen.ch
(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Start 150 years ago

HH. The "myth Myths" awoke early, namely already in the pioneering age of alpinism. As in London in 1857 the world's first alpinist club was launched with the Alpine Club, the founding of the Swiss Alpine Club SAC followed in Olten, in Spring 1863. And just some months later, the Mountaineers virus had reached the heart of Switzerland. A century and a half ago, in August, 1863, eight men from Schwyz climbed for the first time the Great Myths which – as had been said for long – was seemingly unconquerable.

In November of the same year they founded the Myths-Society (now: Association of Myths Friends) with the aim to make this distinctive mountain with its breathtaking panoramic view accessible to other mountain lovers – with a path and a summit hut. Already in September 1864 a bonfire on the summit announced the completion of this steep path which was carved in the rock by Italian *Muratori*, working extremely hard.

When in August 1885 the first mountain cottage had burned down, a new club hut was built "for the purpose of the operation of an inn with a hostel for the night." And because you look down from up there on to the birthplace of the Swiss Confederation, a cross-shaped iron structure was built facing the summit flank of the Schwyz basin which on August 1st, the National Day, mounted with torches, greets as a giant burning Swiss Cross far into the country. This tradition was maintained up to the present day.

Phenomenon Club 100

HH. There are people who are constantly going to the fitness club or on to the fitness trail. Others always climb the same mountain. That is what the few crazies from the Great Myths do. Member of the club can only be who climbs up at least a hundred times a year. Impossible during the short season? Not at all! And if necessary, they do the climbing several times a day. One is said to have made it up to ten visits in 24 hours even. Of course, they carry goods up or litter down for the myth's restaurant keeper. Is there any salt in the kitchen, someone quickly gets down and gets what is missing. So easy!

Years ago this eccentric club still counted only a handful of members who created the crazy part. The record is held by a former myths tenant, *Albert Klein*; in his thirty years as a host he did 4,500 ascents, i.e. 150 per year! Or the former hotel maitre from Einsiedeln, *Peter Guyer*, today "Mythenpöstler" who brings the morning paper and car-

ries the tourists' postcards down to the valley; his legs did more than 3,000 ascents, but a hundred a day is too much now. Or the happy club member *Hairdresser, Carmine Iannitti*, from Ibach; he died in the hot summer of 2003 after his 193rd ascent. At the summit arrival, he, as always, sang "So ein Tag, so wunderschön wie heute" (Such a day, as beautiful as today).

Currently the club of crazies has only one member who meets the unwritten statutes, the white-bearded native *Muotathaler, Armin Schelbert*, called "man", a trained mechanic and retired track builder from Hinwil, almost 70 years old. He helps in the kitchen at the food counter, carries goods up to the mountain and makes repairs. Overall he did more than 2,500 ascents and in 2011 he created even a year world record with 335 climbings. "The mountain is part of my life; I'm going up as long as I can." That he has an artificial knee joint, he does not consider worth mentioning.

Honest politicians – *conditio sine qua non* of democracy

Reflections on Stefan Zweig's biographical novel "Joseph Fouché" from 1929

by Thomas Schaffner

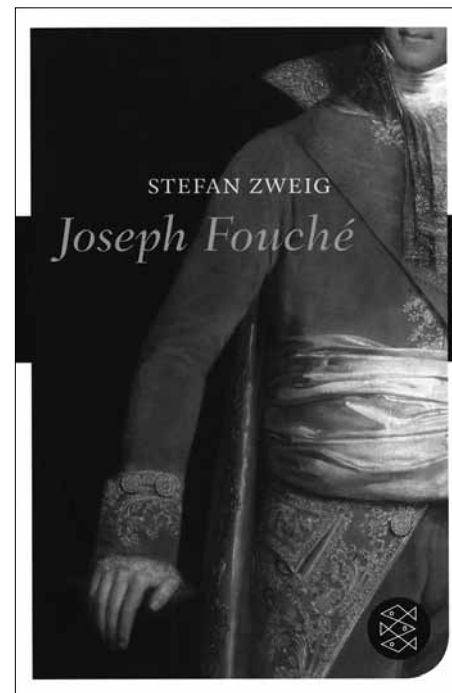
Erasmus of Rotterdam or *Machiavelli* and *Hobbes* – is the nature of man a social one and are humans social beings – or is man a wolf to man, always on the alert not to be assassinated by the evil inside his fellow creatures? This pair of opposites may not only be placed historically, but puts every human being to the test again and again and ultimately claims an answer to the fundamental question: Which way am I going? What do I consider my fellow human beings to be, and what is my conduct towards them? Am I placing my ego above everything, craving for power, influence and mammon and building up a protective wall around me because everybody else is allegedly pursuing the same evil? Or am I turning my attention towards my fellow beings in order to support them on their way, without neglecting mine, living a life of dignity and humanity, marked by empathy, oriented towards the common good, the *bonum commune*?

Does, what is true for the inner circle of the family, also apply to the wider community? Or is it at that point that Erasmus is pushed back by Machiavelli? Does the personalist view of man only apply to the family, to the next of kin, who one would never abuse as a means to an end? If it can be transferred to the cooperative outside the family, characterised by the three "selves": self-responsibility, self-help and self-management – does it also apply to the construction of a state polity? Or to economy as such? The bottom-up structure of our Confederation, for example, the principle of subsidiarity and federalism may let us hope. But as soon as we deal with other countries, would not Machiavellianism be the better option? Since, as geo-strategists like *Zbigniew Brzezinski* explain to us, states can never be friends, but only have interests? Therefore, the Swiss model of perpetual armed neutrality? Or is Switzerland with its principle of state not rather pursuing the path of Erasmus? Putting emphasis on human dignity which, in distress, also knows how to fight back?

You are made to think about all these questions if you take *Stefan Zweig's* biography of *Joseph Fouché* at hand. First issued in a time of trouble, in 1929, the book provides insight into the character structure of a man who succeeded to survive the turmoil of the French Revolution, although always or almost always as minister of police: He who survives a *Robespierre* and *Napoleon*, with whom he had closely worked together, almost certainly must have a special knack for in-

trigue or an unbelievably strong survival instinct. Who within thirty years changes from priest to atheist and finally is given the last rites, who is able to change from republican and regicide to bonapartist, anti-bonapartist and royalist, from the author of the first communist manifesto to multimillionaire and second richest man in France, from the "mass murderer of Lyon" to the "pious lamb" in Trieste – must weigh heavy on all generations after. Who devotes his time to Stefan Zweig's masterfully formulated biography, cannot fail to comparatively eye those who are big in politics today. Is it true what the *Fischer Publishers* blurb suggests that *Zweig* has recognised in Fouché "not only the turncoat and opportunist, but the politician per se"? Whereas Zweig at his time implicitly referred to the 1929 rising, self-proclaimed leader of a party that promised everything to everybody and was strongly funded by background circles, the reader today may think of people who in their career changed political direction several times. Not that a man in the course of his life should not become more intelligent and adjust his beliefs – the question is rather whether you want to follow Machiavelli and Hobbes or Erasmus: Fouché clearly relied on the principle of Machiavelli: All his turns and tricks, his betrayal of his comrades and his ultimate goal to serve only himself, can be found in many a modern politician. Not that this must necessarily be so, if one is politically active. The other way is feasible, this is proven by all the people who walk in the footsteps of Erasmus and, in effect, of humanity, be it on the basis of Christian charity, the principle of Satyagrahas like *Mahatma Gandhi* or many others.

Fouché, the machinator, the gambler, who Napoleon himself could not get under control, not even with a specially set up secret police, aiming only at him as minister of police, as these spies spying on the spies were again spied on ... Fouché stays a major challenge for all people of good will who draw upon a personal view of humanity and who focus on the dignity of man in their efforts – which may well be understood as a way that includes the ability to defend themselves. How to cope with Machiavelli if not with Machiavelli? Even the "great" Napoleon, fooled and duped by the tangle of the various secret police forces, had to experience that it was a dead end, as described above. German Classicism as incorporated in *Goethe's* demanding words that man should be "noble, helpful and good" is not the



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only concept that can be held against the view that man is inherently evil, sneaky and mean. Goethe's character Iphigenia in the drama "Iphigenia in Tauris" entirely draws on openness and honesty – and is thus successful, i.e. she convinces the tyrant Thoas of acting benevolently – instead of sacrificing her brother Orest, stigmatised by the curse of the Tantalides and his companion Pylades on the altar of the domestic deity, he lets Agamemnon's children go in peace.

Openness and honesty, two qualities that would make Fouché's hair stand on end. But even though he manages to keep his head on his shoulders and does not get guillotined, the lot of the Machiavellian is narrow-mindedness and self-inflicted loneliness. Even if remarried after the death of his first wife he, the multimillionaire, cannot assume that his 30 years younger wife has chosen him for his sake and not for the money. At the end of his life, graciously invited by *Mettelnich* into exile to Trieste, he is ridiculed, mocked and shunned. What good are the millions in assets when rumours go about his young wife's amorous escapades with other men and when the only thing that remains for posterity is the reputation to have been the most cunning of cunning, Beelzebub who even knew how to trick his devils Robespierre and Napoleon. Whether Fouché was plagued by nightmares,

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German President came as a salesman for German EU-power politics

km. The following comment is written by a German, who knows Germany and the EU well and has been living in Switzerland for quite some years, now. During his visit to Switzerland, the German Federal President *Joachim Gauck* gave a public speech on 1 April. He tried to make his Swiss audience believe that Switzerland, Germany and the EU are nevertheless very similar and that Switzerland is actually the model for EU-Europe. And he, the President, in fact has always wished and still wishes that Switzerland will be a member of the EU.

So he wanted to make us forget that the difference in political culture between Switzerland and the countries of EU Europe has always been or is even again fundamental. The Swiss historian *Adolf Gasser* has worked out this fundamental difference already in the 1940s and 1950s. In his book "Municipal Freedom in Europe" Gasser described two basic forms of community building and political order: "the principle of subordination and coordination – or expressed differently: the principle of command management and self-management. Either the state order is backed by a magisterial command and power structure, or it is based on the free will of the collective of the people. In the first case the structure of the state is built and proceeds substantially from top down-

wards, in the other case from below upwards. There, the ordering principle is embodied in a habituation to the command and obedience, here in an all-round commitment to free cooperation."

After the Second World War, *Adolf Gasser* has travelled throughout Europe and fought for a new political culture in the European countries. He did this not without success, also in Germany, which kept him busy the most after the National Socialist dictatorship. He wanted to help building a protection.

But since the 1950s the steps towards greater freedom, equality and democracy in the states of Europe were thwarted by means of a construct that is now called European Union. But today, not only the difference between Switzerland and the EU is fundamental. Even compared to the Member States of the EU, the differences have become fundamental; because their democracies are stifled by the EU and a political class within the states that stubbornly follows the EU. Since he took office the Federal President acts as a mouthpiece of this political class and this policy.

But he does not do this in a spirit of openness. Instead, he works with distortions and cover-ups. His superficial praise for direct democracy in Switzerland, was turned immediately into the opposite. He believes in the power of the German

Parliament, although it has lost ground with the population rather than standing up for more political rights. He pretended to be appreciating direct democracy in Switzerland, but at the same time he attacked it; already in his speech and even more during his press conference in which he revealed his contempt for the citizens and his advocacy of an elite rule. So he turned out to be a salesman of the principle of subordination and magisterial command and power structure, representing the habituation to command and obedience.

Unfortunately, the presentation of the German President in Switzerland fit his previous public appearances since taking office. His intentions are not honest. He chooses beautiful sounding words and wants to cover the fact that he speaks in favour of a sick economic and financial system (*Pope Francis*), the political rule of the few and also war, once more.

Obviously *Joachim Gauck* is the kind of politician, who constantly underestimates the people he encounters due to his own hubris. Such politicians underestimate the "Swiss citizens" in any case. They will not fall for flute tones as those of the German President. He did not contribute to better relations between Germany and Switzerland, between the EU and Switzerland. •

"Honest politicians – conditio ..."

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Zweig leaves unmentioned. But it cannot be otherwise but that his world view as a Machiavellian, because it is contrary to the nature of man, does not let its adherer sleep peacefully.

What haunts children and does not let them sleep quietly, what troubles adults in their personal and professional rela-

tionships and often has both a psychological and somatic impact, should it be different for people who engage in political activities and deceive, lie and serve alien masters? He who sold his soul has a different facial expression, a different look. You can tell by looking at his eyes.

With his biographical novel *Zweig* has succeeded to give the reader an insight into history, but also to hold up a mirror

to the reader's own era and his contemporaries. At the end of the book you're upset, you see your world and your own life with different eyes. And the conclusion can only be: Not that way, not for yourself, and you must not let this happen with your fellow beings either, nor with politicians – in order to protect the general public, but also for their own salvation. *Fouché* would hardly have been grateful for that – and today's politicians? •