

Current Concerns

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

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

“NATO and EU on the doorstep of Russia”

Interview with National Councillor Geri Müller, Member of the Foreign Affairs
Committee of the National Council, and Member of the Greens of Switzerland.



Geri Müller
(picture ma)

Current Concerns: Shortly after the plane of the Malaysian Airlines was downed and crashed, it was Putin, who was blamed and held responsible for it.

How would

you assess this allegation and what information concerning the crash did you receive?

National Councillor Geri Müller: In a war truth dies first, also in this case. Assigning blame without evidence, is folly. An international commission of inquiry is now at work, which will hopefully investigate thoroughly who is responsible for the crash. I have received very different pieces of information so far, also contradictory ones.

Is it plausible that Russia is behind the downing?

Until we receive the results of the investigation, the presumption of innocence applies.

It is said that the conflict in the Ukraine is rooted in the Maidan riot in Kiev. The West assigns the blame to Russia, and ultimately blames Putin. Would you go along with this view?

The thesis is too simplistic. In 1991, when Gorbachev declared the end of the Soviet Union, he called on Europe to create a “common European home” between Russia and the former Iron Curtain, with the aim to create a link between East and West, which was to be neither part of the European Community nor the “Council for Mutual Economic Assistance” (CMEA), nor NATO or the Warsaw Pact. Today NATO and the European Union are on the doorstep of Russia and Russia sees itself encircled as a consequence of the integration of the Ukraine, and later potentially Belarus and Kazakhstan.

The secession of the Crimean peninsula and its inclusion in the Russian Federation is condemned mainly by the countries that immediately recognized Kosovo as a new state after the unilateral declaration of independence by the parliament of the Kosovo. How would you explain this?

Fact is that both actions are violations of international law. It is as if both sides claimed: “I don’t, but you do it.

What role do the US and the EU play in the debate about the Ukraine? Both would be delighted if the Ukraine became a member of both the EU and NATO.

How should Russia respond to the policy of the West? Politically, and maybe also economically, but certainly not militarily, in view of the fact that Russia is both a member of the UN and a permanent member of the Security Council.

A few Swiss politicians demand that Switzerland should join the sanctions of the US and the EU. Some go so far as to require that the festivities with Russia concerning the 200 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries should be cancelled. How would you see that?

What sanctions? Travel bans? – Switzerland is a neutral country and should not interfere in this conflict. The 200 years of diplomatic relations with Russia show that Russia has repeatedly played an integral part or it was being integrated; Switzerland as well as Russia have each played their roles well in this process. Two hundred years ago it was the Russian ambassador in Vienna, who demanded that Switzerland should remain a nation when the Swiss didn’t participate in the congress. And in 1992 it was the Swiss, who nominated Russia for the European Council and won the Russians over to join the WTO in 2010. And all this without a war. Should this peaceful development now be wrecked by a boycott? 1914 is a warning that oil should not be added to the fire.

Truth dies first

In 1964, US media reported that the US cruiser *Maddox* had been attacked by a north-vietnamese speed boat in the Gulf of Tonkin. Although the captain of the *Maddox* denied the message, the US government under *Johnson* and the media stuck to their account. That was the (fictional) reason for the United States to enter the Vietnam War. Today we know that this was a lie which finally cost the lives of over 2 million people.

The Serbian Operation Horseshoe against the Kosovars, which was invented by the German Ministry of Defence, or the alleged massacres at Rugovo or Racak were used by NATO in 1999 as an opportunity to attack and bomb Serbia, violating international law. Today, the former German Chancellor *Gerhard Schröder* can say that the war of aggression against Serbia violated international law and was a mistake. For the people who died in the bombings this insight comes too late. How can anybody live with this guilt for thousands of victims on his conscience?

The same pattern applied in the war against Iraq in 2003. The construct serving as the *casus belli* was a lie because *Saddam Hussein* had no weapons of mass destruction, even though the then Secretary of State *Colin Powell* asserted the contrary before the UN Security Council wigwagging his alleged evidence. Furthermore, the poison gas ly in Syria or the alleged massacre of civilians were used to mobilize the public against the *Assad* government before anything could be clarified.

And what is happening right now? Whoever heard the morning news on July 18 learned that a passenger plane of *Malaysia Airlines* had crashed above the Ukraine and came down over a rebel-controlled area. The cause of the crash was still unclear at this time. Basically we are not much further today, 10 days later, because a thorough investigation has yet to start. And that will take a long time if you really want to find out the truth. When in November 1990, an *Al-italia* Boeing 727 crashed approaching Zurich-Kloten airport on Stadler Berg, every component of the aircraft was meticulously collected, trying to reconstruct the crash. This took months, and before that no official statement about

“Why do the US fail to present the findings of their gapless satellite chain?”

NATO organizing a “failing state” named Ukraine

by Willy Wimmer, former State Secretary of the German Federal Ministry of Defense and Vice Chairman of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly



Willy Wimmer
(picture ma)

There are some things which not even your worst enemy deserves, for example the pictures showing the Russian President *Putin* in the latest edition of the American magazine *Newsweek*. The visages we remember from the film “Silence of the Lambs” are nothing in comparison. By these doings, *Newsweek* clearly takes up a tradition whose victim was once the German Emperor *William II*. And all this takes place while we are commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the outbreak of World War I in 1914. It seems to go unnoticed that *Newsweek's* fellow-travellers in London's Fleet Street have joined in this infamous roar of demonization. As we have pertinent “experience with the Huns”, warning bells are ringing. Who has become a target of such denigration, lives dangerously, unless we are seriously mistaken. Someone who attacks an elected president of a country, with whom they even sit in the UN Security Council, no longer needs to voice a declaration of war. *Newsweek* and the British riot press are doing the job. It is reminiscent of the Allied bombing strategy, where the target was illuminated by so-called “Christmas trees” [signal rockets] before being razed to the ground. *Newsweek* acts in accordance with this strategy.

After years of acclimatization to these strategies, one is still amazed at such au-

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What role could and should Switzerland thus play in this conflict, also as to the MH17 air crash?

So far Switzerland has played its role very well, by keeping the role of an intermediary. This is Switzerland's appropriate position, all the more when both sides voice criticism.

Councillor Müller, thank you very much for the interview
(Interview Thomas Kaiser)

dacity. Malaysian Chief Justices, in the British legal tradition, rank the top personnel of our Anglo-Saxon allies in the category of “war criminals”. According to these judges, *Bush* and *Blair* are a case for the war tribunal in The Hague. These days, *Monitor* and other television programmes are increasingly reporting about the atrocities committed by allied troops during the Afghan mission. Iraq, Syria, Libya and Gaza are currently engulfed in a sea of blood, and it is above all the Americans, who have blood on their hands. How are they now to agitate against Russian President Vladimir Putin in the grossest way possible? Putin, who, in connection with the Ukrainian airspace tragedy, has not only found appropriate words, but also instructed his army to present verifiable facts, while we have been waiting in vain for *Obama*, *Cameron*, *Hollande* and *Merkel* to equal this openness. Where are and remain the reconnaissance results of the AWACS command and control systems stationed in Geilenkirchen, which are screening every corner of the Ukraine? Why do the US fail to present the findings of their supposedly gapless satellite chain?

Instead, NATO and Washington feed the public with alleged information from social networks. It is unworthy of states to use such means, whether in the form of dubious recordings of alleged telephone intercepts or – like the traditional press agency *Reuters* – through interviews which later prove to be different from how they were initially published. No state interested in the truth would proceed in this way. This may not surprise though, as there is increasing evidence that the airplane with the Russian President Putin aboard was at the same time in the air as MH 17. According to this non-disclaimed information, it was flying behind the Malaysian aircraft and was delayed. Even more appalling is the assumption – unchallenged by the Western states – that MH 17, which crash-landed in the separatist region, was shot down exactly in that same region. Anyone familiar with aircraft accident investigations – such as the terrible disaster on the US base in Ramstein – can but refer to basic mathematical calculations based on established parameters. According to those, not only mathematical laws are to be taken into account for aircrafts hit by the misfortune of an accident while flying in ten kilometers alti-

tude. Based on universally valid parameters, the crash site must be about a 100 kilometers to the west of the place where the air accident took place. In normal times this presentation of the accident alone wouldn't have permitted to incriminate the Russian President Putin and others with a web of lies. As long as nobody is able to invalidate the parameters applicable to crashed planes in such altitudes, they must be taken into account. Are Western governments no longer able to do this, nor to assess the situation in the Ukraine? Due to the attempted resignation of Prime minister *Jazenuk* and the dissolution of the Ukrainian parliament for subsequent new elections it is made impossible for the Ukraine to compound the conflict in a diplomatic way, a conflict which is aggravated by the fact that people from the Eastern Ukraine are fleeing from the clashes not only to Russia, but also in the direction of Kiev, and there is increasing evidence that those

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the cause of the crash was released, however much speculation, as usual.

This was not so in the case of Malaysia Airlines. After a few days, the US Secret Service and our media claimed to have found the culprit for the disaster.

How come that there is «reliable» information so rapidly? Is this heading towards a war? The majority of people do not want another war and are unlikely to be tricked into it but insist on a reasonable and peaceful solution to a conflict. Ultimately, it is their own daughters and sons who are to be sacrificed for the interests of some mighty ones. If we go about our work with prudence and thoughtfulness, with an honest effort to try to solve problems peacefully, we can avoid all the victims. War was never inevitable, neither in 1914 nor in 1939, 1964, 1991, 1999, or in 2003, even if the media would make us believe otherwise. But it depends on us. Even for the geo-strategists, Zbigniew Brzezinski, certainly no dove, it is clear “when the crescendo of the peoples is too big, you can wage no more war.”

Thomas Kaiser

Statement by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the investigation of the Malaysian plane crash in the Ukrainian air space

"The world community is waiting for a quick and independent investigation of the causes of the Malaysian plane crash in the Ukrainian air space.

For the purposes of carrying out a completely objective investigation, the leaders of the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation asked ten questions to the Ukrainian parties a few days ago. Let us remind them of these

1. The Ukrainian authorities have immediately said that the militia were guilty of the tragedy. What these conclusions are based on?
2. Can the official Kiev state all the details of the use of Buk units in the region of military actions? The main thing is – why are these systems deployed there, because the militia have no planes?
3. What are the causes of inactivity of the Ukrainian authorities to form an international commission? When will such a commission start to work?
4. Are representatives of Ukrainian armed forces ready to provide inter-

national experts with documents on registration of air-to-air missiles and ground-to-air missile and ammunition of air-defence missile systems?

5. Will data from recorders of aircraft movements of Ukrainian air forces from the day of the tragedy be presented to the international commission?
6. Why did Ukrainian air traffic control officers allow a deviation of the plane's route to the north in the direction of the "area of the counter-terrorism operation"?
7. Why wasn't the air space above the area of military actions closed for civilian use, yet more so that there was no gapless radar coverage in this region?
8. Can the official Kiev comment on the messages in social media, allegedly coming from a Spanish air traffic control officer working in Ukraine that the Boeing, which was shot down above the territory of Ukraine, was

accompanied by two military Ukrainian planes?

9. Why does the Ukrainian Security Service started to work with records of talks between Ukrainian air traffic control officers with the Boeing crew and data from Ukrainian radars without international representatives?
10. Did they take into consideration a similar crash of Russian Tu-154 above the Black Sea in 2001? On that occasion the Ukrainian leaders denied - that the Armed Forces of this country were a part of this tragedy until the last moment, until conclusive evidence was found to confirm the guilt of the official Kiev.

Unfortunately, there is no reply from the OSCE to these addresses yet.

We are still expecting that answers will be provided."

Source: http://www.mid.ru/BDOMP/Brp_4.nsf/arh/876F53378670FA0C44257D1D00598EB8?OpenDocument

"Why do the US fail to ..."

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fleeing in the direction of Kiev are treated like enemies there: Women have to dig pits, while men are exposed to forced recruitment. Allegedly, two thirds of the Ukrainian army have deserted, thereby taking along their weapons and other equipment. Those who stay in the army, receive no provisions and have not been given any pay for months. At the same time the process of the internationalisation of the conflict is progressing, according to the news that more and more Spanish and Danish soldiers, not to mention Chechnics, are fighting together with the Eastern Ukrainian territorial army. Just as the speaker of the General Foreign office in Berlin said: "Enough is enough!" With the difference that this exclamation is not addressed to President Putin but to the German Federal Chancellor, the Nato Secretary Gener-

Nothing left but a united media front, forced into line?

"It is not only truth that is among the first victims of war, but it is also diversity of opinions that fall by the wayside. In the beginning of the Ukraine crisis one could still find one or two critical media contributions which described the reality as it was apart from about 250 trivializing and glorifying reports about the alleged "activists". At an early stage there were still some competent persons, such as the former Chancellors Schmidt, Kohl and Schröder, as well as Scholl-Latour and some other authorities on the subject to express themselves critically. However, in the last few weeks we must sum up: In the

opinion-forming media like "Spiegel", "FAZ", "Die Zeit", "taz", "Welt", etc. there is no critical voice left nor any critical contribution differing from the adopted general line. Daily war reporting is conformist and marching in step to such an extent, that there is no room for dissent. It is only due to the assiduously commenting, watchful and informed citizens, that reality does not get entirely crushed under the chains of the media tanks.

Source: www.freitag.de/autoren/mopperkopp/die-mediale-einheitsfront

al, and above all to the American President Obama. Nato has "achieved" quite a lot since the bombardment of Belgrade. And now, for the first time, they are about to organize a "failing state"

named Ukraine, thereby concealing their findings about MH 17. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Whistleblower: US satellite images show Ukrainian troops shooting down MH17

by Paul Joseph Watson

Award winning former *Associated Press* reporter *Robert Parry* has been told by an intelligence source that the United States is in possession of satellite imagery, which shows that Ukrainian troops were responsible for the shoot down of *Malaysian Airlines* Flight 17.

In the absence of any proper investigation, media rhetoric over the last few days has firmly pointed the finger of blame for the downing of the aircraft on Russian-backed Ukrainian rebels, but Parry's source tells a different story.

What I've been told by one source, who has provided accurate information on similar matters in the past, is that U.S. intelligence agencies do have detailed satellite images of the likely missile battery that launched the fateful missile, but the battery appears to have been under the control of Ukrainian government troops dressed in what look like Ukrainian uniforms.

The source said CIA analysts were still not ruling out the possibility that the troops were actually eastern Ukrainian rebels in similar uniforms but the initial as-

essment was that the troops were Ukrainian soldiers. There also was the suggestion that the soldiers involved were undisciplined and possibly drunk, since the imagery showed what looked like beer bottles scattered around the site, the source said.

Although the establishment press has attempted to deride any questioning of the official narrative that Ukrainian rebels were responsible for the incident by invoking the tired "conspiracy theory" pejorative, Parry can hardly be dismissed as a crank given his key role in covering the Iran-Contra scandal for the *Associated Press* and *Newsweek*. Indeed, Parry's investigative work on intelligence matters, for which he was awarded the George Polk Award, suggests that the information provided by his source is worthy of serious attention.

US and Ukrainian authorities continue to insist that Moscow-backed separatists were responsible for the tragedy, asserting that a Buk missile system was used to bring down the airliner. However, this was contradicted by Ukraine's Prosecutor General *Vitaliy Yarema*, who stated, "The military told the President after the passenger plane

had been shot down that the terrorists did not possess our Buk missile systems."

In a related development, audio experts who conducted a study into the authenticity of a recording released by Ukrainian authorities which implicated Russian-backed rebels as being responsible for the missile attack on MH17 concluded that the tape was fabricated.

"The tape's second fragment consists of three pieces but was presented as a single audio recording. However, a spectral and time analysis has showed that the dialog was cut into pieces and then assembled. Short pauses in the tape are very indicative: the audio file has preserved time marks which show that the dialog was assembled from various episodes, the expert said," reports ITAR-TASS. •

Source: Global Research from 22 July 2014 (<http://www.globalresearch.ca/whistleblower-u-s-satellite-images-show-ukrainian-troops-shooting-down-mh17-2/5392688>)

The author's website is <http://www.thetruthseeker.co.uk/?author=119>
<http://www.thetruthseeker.co.uk/?author=119>

Letter to  the Editor

EU ultimatum against Russia – the new Rambouillet?

When comparing *Wimmer's* contribution with the general agitation against Russia and *Putin* by the prevailing Atlantic Press ("Die Welt", "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung", *Die Zeit* and others), *Wimmer's* sober-minded factual analysis stands out favorably.

Wimmer is right: economic sanctions are nothing but economic declarations of war and an EU ultimatum is the intensified form of a pre-declaration of war. The US – and at their insistence, the EU – have yet intensified those sanctions ever more, have increasingly pushed towards an economic war against Russia. The anger of the United States about the fact that Russia and *Putin* did not accept the American High Finance's conquest of the Ukraine but disagreed, can be observed when reading the US – dominated press every day.

Why has the EU and especially Germany allowed themselves to be part of

this war mongering? It shows that we are not sovereign, but a satellite of the United States. The EU has not only been exploited by the United States for the Ukraine conquest but must now even financially rescue and restructure the bankrupt state Ukraine (Association Agreements). We will have nothing but costs however no benefit of a Ukraine that is bound to the EU and part of NATO. Profiteer is the American high finance, which with the help of the *Dreyfus* -Fund's is the largest landowner in the Ukraine and practically the owner of the Ukrainian economy via its oligarchs. Therefore, for the high finance the takeover of Ukraine definitely makes sense. However it does not so for us. We, the Euro-citizens are the people who pay this fiscal conquest of the Ukraine.

Prof. Dr. Eberhard Hamer

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“Coloured revolutions instigated and financed by abroad”

Solving controversies by means of diplomatic efforts

Speech by the Russian President Vladimir Putin to the Council of Security of the Russian Federation



Vladimir Putin
(picture ma)

km. In the following we record the English translation of a keynote address delivered by Russian President Vladimir Putin addressing the Russian Federation Security Council

on 22 July. We are doing this in view of a confrontation that is escalating from week to week to the and that underwent a further escalation by very quickly putting the blame on Russia for the tragic death of 300 air-plane passengers and by the consecutive sanctions imposed by the USA and the European Union. We would like to contribute to a realistic view of this conflict, and we presume that it is indispensable for such an endeavour to take all facts into account, and to take note of the arguments and concerns of the “other side” as well, to take them seriously and to examine them carefully. In his speech Vladimir Putin mentions essential matters of sovereignty and territorial integrity of his country – and that way issues of international politics and world order which are of great importance for every country.

Today we will consider the fundamental issues of maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of this country. We all understand how many political, ethnic, legal, social, economic and other aspects this topic encompasses.

Sovereignty and territorial integrity are fundamental values, as I have already said. We are referring to the maintenance of the independence and unity of our state, to the reliable protection of our territory, our constitutional system and to the timely neutralisation of internal and external threats, of which there are quite a few in the world today. I should make it clear from the start that, obviously, there is no direct military threat to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of this country. Primarily, the strategic balance of forces in the world guarantees this.

We, on our part, strictly comply with the norms of international law and with our commitments to our partners, and we expect other countries, unions of states and military-political alliances to do the same, while

Russia is fortunately not a member of any alliance. This is also a guarantee of our sovereignty.

Any nation that is part of an alliance gives up part of its sovereignty. This does not always meet the national interests of a given country, but this is their sovereign decision. We expect our national legal interests to be respected, while any controversies that always exist, to be resolved only through diplomatic efforts, by means of negotiations. Nobody should interfere in our internal affairs.

However, ever more frequently today we hear of ultimatums and sanctions. The very notion of state sovereignty is being washed out. Undesirable regimes, countries that conduct an independent policy or that simply stand in the way of somebody’s interests get destabilised. Tools used for this purpose are the so-called colour revolutions, or, in simple terms – takeovers instigated and financed from the outside.

The focus is of course on internal problems. Any country always has plenty of problems, especially the more unstable states, or states with a complicated regime. Problems do exist, still it is not clear why they should be used to destabilise and break down a country – something we see rather frequently in various parts of the world.

Frequently the forces used here are radical, nationalist, often even neo-fascist, fundamental forces, as was the case, unfortunately, in many post-Soviet states, and as is the case with Ukraine now. What we see is practically the same thing.

People came to power through the use of armed force and by unconstitutional means. True, they held elections after the takeover, however, for some strange reason, power ended up again in the hands of those who either funded or carried out this takeover. Meanwhile, without any attempt at negotiations, they are trying to suppress by force that part of the population that does not agree with such a turn of events.

At the same time, they present Russia with an ultimatum: either you let us destroy the part of the population that is ethnically, culturally and historically close to Russia, or we introduce sanctions against you. This is a strange logic, and absolutely unacceptable, of course.

As for the terrible tragedy that occurred in the sky above Donetsk – we would like once again to express our condolences to the families of the victims; it is a terrible tragedy. Russia will do everything within its power to ensure a proper comprehensive

and transparent investigation. We are asked to influence the militia in the south-east. As I have said, we will do everything in our power, but this is absolutely insufficient.

Yesterday when the militia forces were handing over the so-called black boxes, the armed forces of Ukraine launched a tank attack at the city of Donetsk. The tanks battled through to the railway station and opened fire at it. International experts who came to investigate the disaster site could not stick their heads out. It was clearly not the militia forces shooting at themselves.

We should finally call on the Kiev authorities to comply with elementary norms of human decency and introduce a cease-fire for at least some short period of time to make the investigation possible. We will of course do everything in our power to make sure the investigation is thorough.

This is exactly why Russia supported the [UN] Security Council Resolution proposed by Australia. We will continue working together with all our partners to ensure a complete and comprehensive investigation. However, if we get back to such scenarios in general, as I have said, they are absolutely unacceptable and counterproductive. They destabilize the existing world order.

Undoubtedly, such methods will not work with Russia. The recipes used regarding weaker states fraught with internal conflict will not work with us. Our people, the citizens of Russia will not let this happen and will never accept this.

However, attempts are clearly being made to destabilize the social and economic situation, to weaken Russia in one way or another or to strike at our weaker spots, and they will continue primarily to make us more agreeable in resolving international issues.

So-called international competition mechanisms are being used as well (this applies to both politics and the economy); for this purpose the special services’ capabilities are used, along with modern information and communication technologies and dependent, puppet non-governmental organizations – so-called soft force mechanisms. This, obviously, is how some countries understand democracy.

We have to give an adequate response to such challenges, and, most importantly, to continue working in a systematic way to resolve the issues that carry a potential risk for the unity of our country and our society.

"Coloured revolutions ..."

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In the past few years, we have strengthened our state and public institutions, the basics of Russian federalism, and we have made progress in regional development, in resolving economic and social tasks. Our law enforcement agencies and special services have become more efficient in combatting terrorism and extremism; we are forming a modern basis of our ethnic policy, adjusting approaches to education; we are constantly combatting corruption – all this guarantees our security and sovereignty.

At the same time, we should keep these issues in mind. If necessary, we have to quickly develop and implement additional measures. We need to have a long-term plan of action in these areas, strategic documents and resolutions.

In this regard, I would like to draw attention to several priority challenges.

The first is working consistently to strengthen interethnic harmony, ensure a competent migration policy, and react rigidly to inactions by officials and crimes that may be triggered by interethnic conflicts.

These are challenges for all levels of government, from the federal to the municipal. And, of course, it is extremely important for our civil society to take an active position and react to infringements on human rights and freedoms, helping to prevent radicalism and extremism.

We are particularly relying on civil society for effective help in improving the system of state governance with regard to ethnic policy and educating young people about the spirit of patriotism and responsibility for the fate of their Fatherland, which is particularly important. We discussed this

in great detail recently at a meeting of the Council for Interethnic Relations.

By the way, I want to clearly state that – with the help of the civil society – we will never entertain the thought of improving our work in these areas solely by cracking down, so to speak. We will not do that under any circumstances; we will rely on civil society, first and foremost.

Our second important challenge is protecting constitutional order. Constitutional supremacy and economic and legal unity must be ensured throughout all of Russia. Federal standards as defined by the Constitution are inviolable and nobody has the right to break the law and infringe on citizens' rights.

It is important for all Russians, regardless of where they live, to have equal rights and equal opportunities. This is the foundation for a democratic system. We must rigorously observe these Constitutional principles, and to do this, we must build a clear system of state authority, striving to ensure that all its components function as a united whole, precisely and systemically; this should include increasing local authorities' role as part of Russia's overall government mechanism. And naturally, reinforcing the efficacy of the work of the judicial system, the prosecutors, and the regulatory and supervisory authorities should strengthen Russia's statehood.

The third key challenge is sustainable and balanced economic and social development. At the same time, it is fundamentally important to take into account territorial and regional factors. I mean that we must ensure priority development for strategically important regions, including in the Far East and other areas; we must simultaneously reduce drastic gaps between regions

in terms of the economic situation and people's living standards. All this needs to be taken into account when developing federal and sectorial programmes, improving inter-budgetary relations and building plans to develop infrastructure, selecting locations for new plants and creating modern jobs.

I also feel that we must think about additional steps to decrease the dependence of the national economy and financial system on negative external factors. I am not just referring to instability in global markets, but possible political risks as well.

Fourth, our Armed Forces remain the most important guarantor of our sovereignty and Russia's territorial integrity. We will react appropriately and proportionately to the approach of NATO's military infrastructure toward our borders, and we will not fail to notice the expansion of global missile defence systems and increases in the reserves of strategic non-nuclear precision weaponry.

We are often told that the ABM system is a defence system. But that's not the case. This is an offensive system; it is part of the offensive defence system of the United States on the periphery. Regardless of what our foreign colleagues say, we can clearly see what is actually happening: groups of NATO troops are clearly being reinforced in Eastern European states, including in the Black and Baltic seas. And the scale and intensity of operational and combat training is growing. In this regard, it is imperative to implement all planned measures to strengthen our nation's defence capacity fully and on schedule, including, of course, in Crimea and Sevastopol, where essentially we need to fully recreate the military infrastructure. •

Source: <http://www.eng.kremlin.ru/news/22714>

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Extension of the gas war to the Levant

by Thierry Meyssan



Thierry Meyssan
(picture voltairenet)

After three years of war against Syria, "West" have deliberately expanded its offensive to Iraq and then to Palestine. Behind the seeming-

ly political contradictions between religious and secular parties there are strong economic interests that explain this strategy. In the Levant, many groups have repeatedly changed camp, but the natural gas deposits are unchangeable.

Every war being undertaken by a coalition naturally has multiple objectives in order to meet the specific interests of each member of the coalition.

From this point of view, the fights now raging in Palestine, Syria and Iraq have in common that they are led by a bloc formed by the United States against the peoples who resist them, to continue the remodeling of the "Greater Middle East" and change the global energy market.

About this last point, two things can change: the layout of the pipelines and the exploitation of new deposits.¹

The war to control pipelines in Iraq

Since the beginning of the war against Syria, NATO has been trying to cut the [East-West] Tehran-Damascus (NIORDC, INPC) nexus to the advantage of an alternative [South-North] corridor allowing the transfer of both Qatari gas (Exxon-Mobil) and that of Saudi Arabia (Aramco) via the Syrian coast.²

A decisive step was taken with the Islamic Emirate offensive in Iraq that has split the country longitudinally and separated Iran on the one hand and on the other hand, Syria, Lebanon and Palestine.³

This visible goal determines who will sell their gas to Europe, and therefore the volume of supply and the selling price. That explains that the three major gas exporters (Russia, Qatar, and Iran) are involved in this war.

The war of conquest over Syrian gas

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"NATO has added a second goal: the control of gas reserves in the Levant and their exploitation. Though everyone knows that for decades the Southern Mediterranean contains large gas fields in the territorial waters of Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Cyprus, only 'Westerners' have known, since 2003, how these fields were laid out and how they extended under the continent."

in the territorial waters of Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Cyprus, only "Westerners" have known, since 2003, how these fields were laid out and how they extended under the continent.

As revealed by Professor *Imad Fawzi Shueibi*⁴, at the time, a Norwegian company, Ansis, lawfully conducted in Syria a survey of the country, in cooperation with the national oil company. Ansis also worked with another Norwegian company, *Sagex*. Both, having corrupted an intelligence official, secretly conducted research in three dimensions and discovered the incredible extent of Syrian reserves. These are larger than those of Qatar.

Thereafter, Ansis was acquired by *Veritas SSGT*, a Franco-American company based in London. The data were immediately revealed to the French, US, British and Israeli governments who soon concluded their alliance to destroy Syria and steal its gas.

After the United States had, in 2010, entrusted to France and the UK the care of recolonising Syria, they formed a coalition called "Friends of Syria". It convened a "Working Group on Economic Reconstruction and Development" held in May 2012 in the United Arab Emirates, under German Presidency.⁵ Sixty countries then divided the cake they had not yet conquered. Of course, most participants were unaware of the Ansis discoveries and *Sagex*. The Syrian National Council was represented in the working group by *Osama al-Kadi*, former head of *British Gas* for the application of military strategies in the energy market.

It was not until the summer of 2013 that the Syrian government was informed of the findings of Ansis and *Sogex*, understanding then how Washington had managed to form the coalition trying to destroy the country.

Since then, President *Bashar al-Assad* has signed contracts with Russian companies for their future exploitation.

Gas in Israel, Palestine and Lebanon

For its part, British Gas was exploring Palestinian reserves, but Israel opposed their use, fearing that the royalties be used to buy weapons.

In July 2007, the new special envoy of the Quartet (UN, EU, Russia, USA), *Tony Blair*, negotiated an agreement between Palestinians and Israelis to exploit the Marine-1 and Marine-2 fields in Gaza. The Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority, *Salam Fayyad*, agreed that British Gas would pay royalties due to the Palestinian Authority to a bank account controlled by London and Washington so as to guarantee that this money would be used for economic development.

At the time, the former Chief of Staff of the Israeli army, General *Moshe Ya'alon*, published a sensational forum on the website of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs in which he observed that this agreement did not solve the problem because ultimately Hamas would receive a portion of the money as long as it was in power in Gaza. He concluded that the only way to ensure that the manna would not fund the Resistance was to launch a "comprehensive military operation to uproot Hamas in Gaza"⁶.

In October 2010, things got complicated again with the discovery of a mega gas field offshore by *Noble Energy Inc.*, the Leviathan, in Israeli and Lebanese territorial waters, in addition to that discovered by British Gas in 2001, Tamar.⁷

Lebanon, at the instigation of Hezbollah, immediately notified the UN and asserted its rights to exploitation. However,

“Extension of the gas war ...”
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er, Israel started extracting gas from these common pockets without taking Lebanese objections into account.

The war for Palestinian gas

The current Israeli offensive against Gaza has several objectives. First, the Mossad organized the announcement of the kidnapping and death of three young Israelis to prevent the Knesset from passing a law prohibiting the release of “terrorists”.⁸ Then, the current Minister of Defence, General Moshe Ya’alon, used this as a pretext to launch an offensive against Hamas, applying his 2007 analysis.⁹

The new Egyptian President, General *Abdel Fattah al-Sisi*, hired Tony Blair to advise him, without the latter resigning for as much from his position as representative of the Quartet.¹⁰ Pursuing his advocacy for British Gas, he then suggested a “peace initiative” perfectly unacceptable to the Palestinians, who refused while Israel accepted it. This manoeuvre was clearly intended to provide an opportunity for the IDF to continue its offensive to “uproot Hamas from Gaza.”

It is not irrelevant that Tony Blair is not remunerated for this work by Egypt, but by the United Arab Emirates.

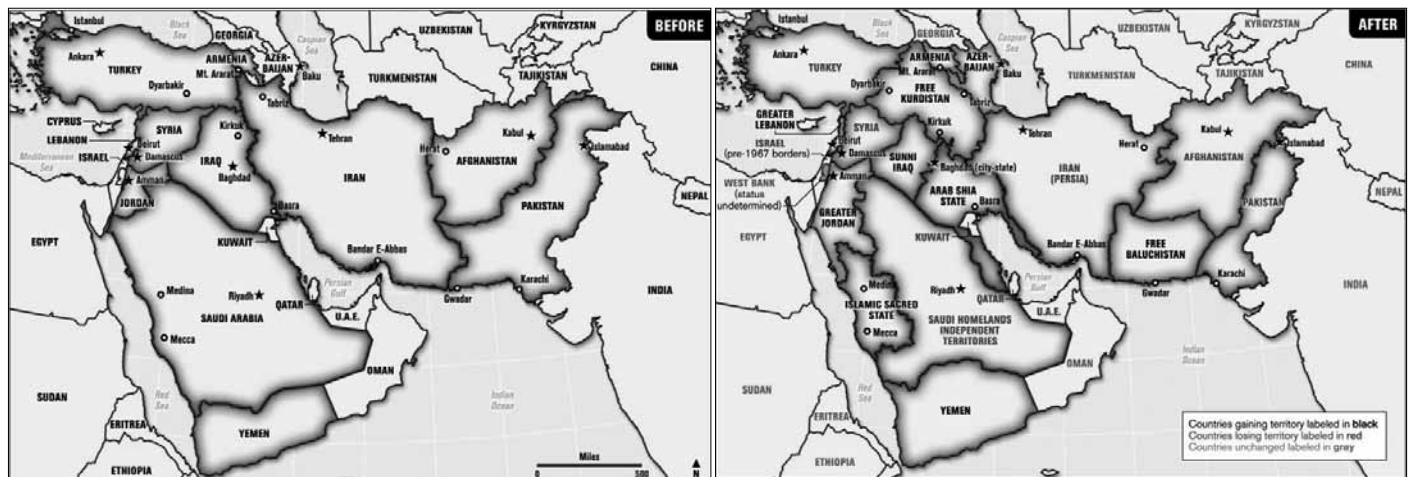
As usual, Iran and Syria supported the Palestinian Resistance (Hamas and Islamic Jihad). In this way, they also showed Tel Aviv they have the ability to hurt it as much in Palestine as it did in Iraq through the Islamic Emirate and the Barzanis.

Only by reading events from an energy point of view can they be understood. For it is not politically in the interest of Israel to destroy Hamas, which it helped create to relativize Fatah. Nor is it in the interest of Syria to help it resist since it allied itself with NATO and sent jihadists to fight against the country. Gone is the period of the “Arab Spring”, which was supposed to bring to power the Muslim Brotherhood (of which Hamas is the Palestinian branch) in all of the Arab countries. Ultimately Anglo-Saxon imperialism is ever driven by economic ambitions, which it imposes to the detriment of local political dynamics. The cleavage, which sustains structures in the Arab world, is not between religious and secular parties, but between resisters to and collaborators with imperialism.

(Translation Roger Lagassé)

Source: *Al-Watan* (Syria), Damascus, 21 July 2014

- 1 “La guerre en Syrie: une guerre pour l’énergie?” by Alexandre Latsa, *RIA Novosti/Réseau Voltaire*, 18 September 2013.
- 2 “Jihadism and the Petroleum Industry” by Thierry Meyssan, Translation Roger Lagassé, *Al-Watan/Voltaire Network*, 23 June 2014.
- 3 Nothing new, see: “Syria: NATO sets its sights on gas pipeline”, by Manlio Dinucci, *Il Manifesto/Voltaire Network*, 13 October 2012; « Syrie : la course à l’or noir » by Manlio Dinucci, *Il Manifesto/Réseau Voltaire*, 2 April 2013.
- 4 Syrie: 10 ans de résistance (Syria: 10 years of Resistance), six parts program by Thierry Meyssan, Syrian national TV, June 2014. See also : “Struggle over the Middle East: Gas Ranks First” by Imad Fawzi Shueibi, *Voltaire Network*, 17 April 2012.
- 5 “The “Friends of Syria” divvy up Syrian economy before conquest” by German Foreign Policy, *Voltaire Network*, 30 June 2012.
- 6 “Does the Prospective Purchase of British Gas from Gaza Threaten Israel’s National Security?”, by Lt.-Gen. (ret.) Moshe Yaalon, Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 19 October 2007. “Ya’alon: British Gas natural gas deal in Gaza will finance terror” by Avi Bar-Eli, *Haaretz*.
- 7 “Israel’s Levant Basin – a new geopolitical curse?” by F. William Engdahl, *Voltaire Network*, 20 February 2012.
- 8 “Le chef du Mossad avait prédit l’enlèvement de trois jeunes Israéliens” by Gerhard Wisniewski, *Réseau Voltaire*, 8 July 2014.
- 9 “IDF’s Gaza assault is to control Palestinian gas, avert Israeli energy crisis” by Nafeez Ahmad, *The Guardian*, 9 July 2014. “Gaza: le gaz dans le viseur” by Manlio Dinucci, *Il Manifesto/Réseau Voltaire*, 17 July 2014.
- 10 “President al-Sisi chooses Tony Blair as economic advisor”, *Voltaire Network*, 4 July 2014.



ts. The map above from the US American military magazine “Armed Forces Journal” (AFJ) illustrated the article “Blood Borders” in June 2006, by Ralph Peters. The now retired US officer saw an opportunity to reduce regional tensions by drawing new boundaries in the Middle East and Asia. The boundaries – dating back to the Peace Treaty after the First World War – took ethnic, sectarian and tribal issues too little into account, says Peters. As the AFJ put it on its website, the article and the map are now widely understood as a template for Washington’s imperial interventions.

In his article, Peters lists the winners and losers of the “Great Game” of the 21st century, while he defines states that are winners, losers or both at the same time.

The winners are: Afghanistan, the Arab Shia State, Armenia, Azerbaijan, the free Balochistan, the free Kurdistan in Iran, the Holy Islamic state, Jordan, Lebanon and Yemen. The losers: Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, and the West Bank.

Looking from a 2014’s perspective to the planning in 2006 and earlier there is only one conclusion to be

drawn: The implementation is in full swing – the citizens of each of the listed states are worriedly asking which boundaries will probably be redrawn next. Today, the Iraq is de facto divided. And how about Syria and Saudi Arabia? The UN Charta clearly holds something against this planning: the sovereignty of each UN Member State and the inviolability of its borders. External forcing is clearly opposed to the Charter and thus is against international law.

Source of the map image: www.armedforcesjournal.com/2006/06/1833899

Special session on the human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory including East Jerusalem

Statement by Makarim Wibisono, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967

thk. On July 23, the UN Human Rights Council met in Geneva. It was a Special Session on the human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. This Special Session had been requested by Egypt as a representative of the Group of Arab States, Pakistan for the Organisation of Islamic Countries, Niger on behalf of the United Nations African Group, Iran as representative of the Non-Aligned Movement and by the permanent representation of Palestine to the United Nations. The request was supported by 17 additional states which are members of the Human Rights Council, such as Russia, Venezuela, Morocco and others, and by several states which have only observer status at the Human Rights Council.

It was a high-profile delegation: Navi Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Kyung-wha Kang, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Lance Bartholomeusz, Acting Director of Legal Affairs, UNRWA, and Makarim Wibisono, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967. They pointed to the severe violations of human rights in the third war in Gaza since 2006.

Before entering into general dialogue between the states, the current situation in Gaza was described in four keynote addresses, which painted a grim picture. The number of civilian casualties is immense (until Sunday evening it had risen to approximately 1000), and the scenario is reminiscent of the two past wars in the Gaza Strip. After six hours of debate, the Council voted on a resolution which requires, among other things, the immediate cessation of hostilities and the deployment of a commission to investigate the human rights violations in the Gaza Strip. 29 of the 49 countries represented in the Human Rights Council voted for the resolution, the US were the only nation that opposed. 17 countries abstained from voting, including all European countries except Russia, which voted in favour of the resolution. Thus the resolution was adopted. An investigative commission will be formed and will travel to the Gaza Strip to determine the human rights violations that have occurred in the current war.

The message of Makarim Wibisono, UN special rapporteur on human rights in the Palestinian territories, to the Coordination Committee of Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council, is published below.



The United Nations in Geneva, home of the UN-Human Rights Council (picture thk)

The Coordination Committee of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council has asked me to deliver this statement on its behalf. I fully associate my mandate to it in my capacity as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

We express our dismay at the deaths, injuries, displacement, and devastation, resulting from renewed hostilities among Israel, Hamas and Palestinian armed groups in the occupied Gaza Strip.

As of 22 July, figures of casualties recorded by the United Nations reveal the extent of the suffering: 599 Palestinians were killed (including at least 443 civilians, among them 147 children and 74 women). An estimated 3,504 others were injured, two thirds of them women and children. During the same period, thousands of rocket and mortar fire directed at Israeli towns and villages killed two civilians, injured at least 15, and spread considerable fear among people in the affected areas. Armed confrontations in Gaza further resulted in the death of 27 Israeli soldiers.

Since the beginning of the hostilities, courageous human rights defenders and organizations, working often at great risk to their safety, have been documenting and exposing some of these violations. We recall, among many other reports, the video footage of the four Bakr children who were killed by an Israeli missile while playing on the beach; or the killing

in the evening of 21 July in Khan Yunis of 25 people from three families, including 18 children and five women, two of them pregnant, after the building where they lived was hit by a missile.

In addition to the deaths and injuries, the destruction of numerous houses has left several thousand families homeless. An estimated 470 houses were destroyed and several thousand others damaged. Over 135,000 people have had to leave their homes and seek refuge in the schools that UNRWA has turned into temporary shelters, in public premises, hospital compounds or with relatives. OCHA estimates that 116,000 children – who have experienced bombing, death, injury, or loss of home – are in need of psychosocial support. Similarly in Israel, the incessant firing of rockets has resulted in the displacement of persons and severe psychological strain to numerous children.

Israel's bombings have caused further damage on essential life-support infrastructures. An estimated 50% of critical sewage pumping and water treatment centres have been damaged or destroyed and are no longer operating, depriving some 900,000 people, or more than half of the population of Gaza, of basic water and sanitation services. An estimated 80% of the population receives electricity for only four hours a day. UNRWA reported that several of its schools, clinics or warehouses were damaged by air raids and

Reading – the royal road to education of the mind

by Peter Küpfer

Recently I visited Erlangen at the invitation of an impressive private social work. The institution there has been working for thirty years with people impaired in their everyday lives. In decentrally structured living communities they support each other to gain a better foothold in life. Care is taken to ensure that everybody makes their contribution to common living, working and further development, even if this contribution – depending on the respective life circumstances – may be rather modest temporarily. In the carers' dealing with those entrusted to their care the warm tone and the mutual respect were remarkable. Both were indeed mutual and genuine. One of the institution's principles is to meet each other in mutual cooperation "at eye level", and with respect for the dignity inherent in every human being on this world of ours, because he or she is a human being.

Literature trains empathy

As part of the anniversary celebrations, I conducted a workshop on basic questions of literature. Not only carers, also

people being cared showed great interest. Already at the very beginning one participant vividly followed, joined the discussion and the debate – not in the academic sense, but with the background of the "school of life". Among other things it was about the benefit that we gain by reading, especially by reading literary texts, such as novels, stories, poems, dramas and the like. On that occasion I realized a concern always present in my mind both for biographical reasons as well because of my lifelong preoccupation with language and literature – as a teacher, a journalist, a lecturer and a translator: it is above all the works of classical literature, which accomplish to a high degree, what no other "media", as we say today, are able to accomplish: to train and to cultivate individual empathy.

Why literature?

There are many answers to explain why reading of (classical) literature is an ideal way to the training of empathy. Our fastest way of realizing the main accomplishment of literature, is to take recourse to the

beautiful German word "Dichtung" (poetry). In German-speaking culture literature is mostly understood as poetry (Dichtung). Why do we call linguistic work of art just Dichtung? At the heart of this is the word stem "dicht" (compact). To what extent does literature include something compact (etwas Dichtes)? One of the participants of the workshop gave the answer as precisely as if they were phrasing it for the dictionary: "Poetry (Dichtung) is compact because it summarizes life concentrating on essentials while depicting it." I have never heard a shorter and better explanation. Why are we, many hundreds of years later, interested in the fates of two desperately loving human beings belonging to two influential enemy families in the Verona of the Renaissance? Why does a pious knight's defiantly arguing with his God by whom he feels badly treated, touch us up to this very day? And the loneliness of a young German woman at the end of the 19th century, who was married to a much older, and alas, a lit-

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other fire. Reportedly, a hospital in Deir El Balah was hit by an airstrike which killed at least four persons and injured 16.

In the meanwhile, hate speech and incitement to hatred and violence, have reached unprecedented levels, including from official personalities and in social media from all sides. This cannot be tolerated, should be unreservedly condemned and treated as criminal offences punishable by law.

The right of the Palestinian people to resist occupation cannot justify the launching of thousands of rockets and mortars directed against Israeli civilians. Rocket attacks cannot justify the disproportionate use by Israel of air, sea and ground firepower against targets, including tunnels and rocket launchers, amidst a population of 1.7 million people trapped in one of the most densely populated areas of the world.

Much more needs to be done to protect civilians and respect international human rights law and international humanitarian law, in particular the principles of necessity, distinction, proportionality and precaution in carrying out attacks.

This latest military confrontation comes on top of the long-standing illegal blockade imposed on Gaza, which has resulted in distressing levels of poverty and severe

restrictions on the enjoyment by Palestinians in Gaza of their economic and social rights. We are deeply concerned that it will further undermine the already precarious conditions of survival that the Gaza population experiences because of the blockade. This renewed episode of violence takes place in the context of a long-term occupation, which compromises the enjoyment of all human rights by individuals and undermines prospects of a just and peaceful settlement of the conflict.

We appeal to all parties to this conflict to cease this devastating cycle of violence, and resume talks aimed at a just and peaceful solution. We call on them to abide by the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law and international human rights law. We remind them that indiscriminate and disproportionate attack against centres of population amount to war crimes. Perpetrators of such acts, as well as other human rights violations, must be held accountable. We urge prompt, independent and effective investigations into all allegations of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. We welcome steps that have already been taken in this context.

We offer our independent human rights expertise to assist in the conduct of these investigations which should be guided by the principles of independence, objectivity, impartiality and credibility. All the victims

of this senseless violence have a right to justice and to live free from fear and want.

We welcome the standing invitation extended by the State of Palestine to all special procedures mandate holders, and stand ready to offer our expertise on the wide range of human rights issues we cover, to support Palestinian and Israeli authorities to address them. To do so, we request the Governments of Israel and of the State of Palestine to grant us prompt and unhindered access to all affected areas in the occupied Palestinian territory and Israel, and call for cooperation from the relevant authorities in this regard, including with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.

We urge Israel to allow unimpeded access to humanitarian food, water, medical and other vital assistance to all civilians and affected areas, and to end the illegal blockade. We also urge Egypt to ease the restrictions at the Rafah crossing and allow the entry of essential humanitarian assistance.

Lastly, we urge the international community and the Security Council to do all they can to explore avenues to foster an effective peace process that will address the causes of this conflict that has lasted for far too long and to bring about a just, peaceful, dignified and sustainable solution.

Thank you.

Source: <http://www.ohchr.org>

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tle cold husband, how does this concern us? Because in the fate of *Romeo and Juliet* every young person, at least partially, recognize themselves, if their love meets with familiar resistance. Because it is part of everybody who is growing more mature, – not only of the knight *Parzival*, to be able to accept hard blows of fate and to find meaning and probation in them. It is because we empathize with young *Effie Briest* and because we are shocked just as much as she herself was, when the young girl, still half a child, is called away from her swing in the park into the salon, where Baron Innstetten is waiting, a gentleman hitherto unknown to her, who age-wise could be her father, and her mother informs her, that he was her future husband.

Identification with the other self

In literature we encounter a manageable number of people that we get to know better connected by the events. This is especially true for the main characters. In classic novels, for example, we are not only able to follow significant periods of their lives – we also get to know the people in their thoughts, their secret desires, their hopes and their despairs. The Stuttgart Germanist and philosopher *Kate Hamburger* has already pointed out in her major work, "Die Logik der Dichtung" (The Logic of Literature) in the 50s that it is the novell that creates such a lasting identification – at least in its classical form –, because we get to know the main character from within. In the novella this is mainly achieved by the verbs of the inner processes, like "thinking, dreaming, imagining, getting annoyed, revolting, feeling, understanding," etc. The narrator does not only tell us that the main character perceives something and what he feels in the situation. No, he describes these sensations in their chronological sequence, often by pages, so that we witness how it looks like inside the described figure, something that does not exist in life. In real life, we can speculate about it, especially when a human counterpart opens to give us access to his feelings and sensations, which is usually the case with family members, close friends or acquaintances. But the fact that we learn about an unknown man, what is going on inside him, one to one, being able to follow continuously his feelings and thoughts, "originally" – it is only the narrativethis which can create this, the novel in the logic of communication forms. Even in the play this "close contact" with the other human is more distanced. So then, the classic theater likes to take refuge in the monologue. Without it we would not find out "authentically" what it looks like for exam-

ple in *Egmont*, who is waiting for his execution, without the monologue we would not know how *Hamlet* feels at his father's grave. As we participate in a person's life through literature, we begin to see the world through his eyes, whether we like it or not. Literature "works" that way.

The question of meaning ...

As was noted in the introduction, poetry intensifies life. Poetry filters everyday life, queries about it and examines it until we get to the substance, to the essence. Often, the essence occurs only in the end, with the last pages of a novel. We often have to review the beginning once again in the light of the whole to understand it "completely". But often a story, a poem, remains closed up to us. Despite significant efforts, it does not "address" us, it does not speak to us. But if we manage to put down the book only with difficulty, if it does not leave us alone, then we can be sure that it holds something that we ourselves are concerned about. It reveals its meaning, which can be taken by different readers in different ways, as literature indeed is very complex. As a teacher it happened to me over and over again that I had not noticed before although I had dealt with it in a class for the fourth or fifth time as the classes reading material. Also, I have experienced with my students that they made very accurate observations on the subject of a text that I had not recognised so far. This richness of literature is certainly part of the value of a literary text. It does not mean that you may "interpret into" the text anything that just crosses your mind. Guiding principle in my classes (with students of a grammar school-Gymnasium) was always to take recourse to the text itself: If the text allows this or that interpretation (in the entire context), then it is "right". If it contradicts the wording of the text itself, then it is not adequate.

Because this is true, the question of meaning rises quite centrally while reading literary texts in their entirety. What is the point of the situation, for example, in *Büchner's* eponymous theater torso *Woyzeck* when he looks at the landscape with staring eyes and draws his friend's attention to the soil they are standing on, that is hollow and might soon collapse. These are the Freemasons, he whispers a little later. Only reading all the scenes of *Büchner* will permit an overall understanding, also taking this scene into account. Here *Büchner* anticipates visionarily (the play dates from the 1830s) how a person being isolated and disrespected gets more and more into a state that today's psychiatrists would consider as paranoia. With the progress of the scenes we also understand why. *Woyzeck* was ridi-

culed as an "idiot" from his youth on, he had to look on how his love was making mooneyes at a martial soldier, while he realizes at the same time that his modest income would never be enough, to maintain Marie and the child she is pregnant with.

... is also a question of values

We can read poetry correctly only if we give it a meaning, namely that which is contained within itself. We do not find life itself in literature, but the image of life created by the word. Unlike in everyday life, we experience life in all its substance, its essence – it is the life seen by the author, mediated by the people who populate his writings. We, as readers can participate in it, experience it by means of our empathy. It is the way the individual psychologist *Alfred Adler* describes a man or woman whose sense of community comes into play, without being distorted or "emotionally confused". It is due to this empathy that man is able to "see with the eyes of another, to hear with the ears of another, and to feel with the heart of another." This is as central as in literature as in real life. Also in everyday conversation we would not be able to understand the person talking to us if we did not put ourselves in the other's shoes, at least to a certain point, i.e. to the extent that is necessary to understand the meaning of his "expression". The English linguistics and "philosophy of everyday life" have pointed out that even an everyday expression such as "There's a draft in here" can have quite different meanings. It can be a statement, a call to close the window or the door, or the manifestation of anger or discomfort. We understand what is meant by sharing the situation in which such remark is made. Literature, however, must – through description or previous narratives – create the situation, in which we then understand what the characters say or do. The more practice we have to understand such situations, the better our understanding is, both in real life and when reading literature.

The importance of empathy has been recognised not only by *Alfred Adler*. American Neo-Freudianism and the studies by *John Bowlby* and by Swiss ethologist *Adolf Portmann* have confirmed his finding. Empathy is the key competence that enables human beings to understand each other. Sensitive people usually have a well-developed empathy. However, it is also available for more "prosaic" people, as a specifically human capability, conveyed by language. Without it the world would be a labyrinth with scattered pieces of language lying around their original form and meaning would be forever lost.

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It is of course essential for the meaning of literature what values the author conveys through the picture of life he depicts. This may be very obvious, then the author paints black and white, as we say figuratively. However, it can also be more concealed, so that the author leaves some leeway to the readers to explore the judgements contained in the "story" themselves. E.g., *Theodor Fontane* is an example of this kind of giving meaning in a floating way. Although Effie suffers from the personality of her husband, a certain human grandeur, bringing about respect, cannot be denied. Often it is not the case that a certain character serves as a memorial to the author himself. On the contrary, it is part of his art to be empathic enough to be able to portray also people who do not or only partly conform to him. Through these nuances the image of life designed by literature becomes even more real, even if the meaning of the artwork becomes more complex, more "difficult".

Art requires a sense of responsibility

Thereby we have arrived at the artists' special responsibility. It applies in particular to those producers of art – to use the modern hackneyed word here – who generate identification and compassion by means of images or language, especially authors and film directors, but also to painters and photographers. It was not until the value-negating and self-centred philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre that literature and film allowed themselves – in that once more obedient followers of Nietzsche – to make common criminals and murderers to characters with whom the reader should empathise. The distinguished French sociologist Michel Foucault followed him enthusiastically on this self-destructive path, as well as the so-called "Frankfurt School" around *Adorno* did. Modern culture industry which everywhere just aims at quick success and sensation has long since made this value-negating their own thing, as it seems a pretty lucrative one. In many films, starting with the Sado-Western of the 60s of the type "A Fistful of Dollars" (*Sergio Leone*), or the often brutalising texts of rap and hard rock music groups, to the "killer games" (computer games) so common with adolescents that engulf our often unsuspecting youth, in the current so-called Western culture triumph sadism, cynicism and contempt of our allegedly obsolete social values. Sometimes one gets the impression that our so-called "culture" follows the motto of the Roman Empire, just before it went down. Also there the people becoming discontent were soothed according to the principle "bread and cir-

cuses". In many parts of the world, people can be found today who no longer can afford their bread because we in the West impose economic laws on them that make them starve. And yet, mobile phones (and thus internet and games) are very common there.

Recommit to the classical ideals

Friedrich Schiller was a life-long revolutionary, but a real one, who aimed at nothing less than a humane world. Already as a young man he experienced the inhumanity of European absolutism in the years before the French Revolution. His early plays are a single accusation of the German petty state despotism of the late 18th century. For his courageous defense of human dignity, freedom and brotherhood among men, he was appointed French citizen of honor by the Constituent Assembly of revolutionary France. With his last play, *Wilhelm Tell*, which Schiller, already seriously ill, wrested from his health, he did not only illustrate the liberation struggle of the *Urschweizer* (early Swiss confederates) against arbitrariness, tutelage and tyranny, he also built all peoples' desire for freedom a literary monument with it. Schiller was not only a serious historian who underpinned all his plays with intensive study of the sources, but also a brilliant literary theorist. In particular, he gained groundbreaking knowledge about the function of the theatre of his time. As he himself was shocked by the fact that the motto "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" resulted in the terror regime of *Robespierre* and the regicide and the slaughter of nearly the whole French nobility, he saw literature as a last resort to guide the human race towards its true destiny.

Not only the individual but mankind itself needs education

It simply takes longer, he wrote in one of his theory of drama papers („Über die ästhetische Erziehung des Menschen“ [On the Aesthetic Education of Man, 1795]. Man cannot immediately arrive at organising his life and its institutions (state) accordingly from a detected and recognized ideal (for example the slogans of the French Revolution). The step is too big. Is there anything that could help him organise the world more humanely? Yes, is the answer of the great playwright: It is the theatre. Here, the spectator, the citizen and contemporary sees what moved great humans in great times. As already in ancient drama he becomes eyewitness of harrowing human challenges. He feels sympathy for the destiny of important persons; in fact he sees them as humans in the theatre, not as the embodiment of ideals. He experiences both good and bad not in a purely philosophical and

abstract way, but taught by the strokes of fate performed by the actors on the stage. Through this human object-lesson routed in an emotional basis man can purify himself more easily and with less resistance. This way he can also use the slogan of classical literature, *Goethe's* word, more easily for himself: „Let man be a noble creature, helpful and good“. Apart from style and language the *Goethe* word is almost congruent with article 1 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights of 10 December 1948 which was established to ban war from this world after the catastrophe of WW II once and for ever: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

The classical period does not belong into the museum!

It is the right time to examine the roots of this thinking more precisely. Classical literature, particularly the German one, made a significant contribution here as well. Instead of smiling at the ideals of the classical period, schools, notably the German-speaking ones, should compete for transferring these ideals into our modern world. In secondary schools, that is for example in grammar schools the first step would be to understand the classical period. Young people of today will certainly make an effort to understand the language of classical texts. But also mathematics cannot be understood without an effort, nor can be English or the so-called computer sciences. Even here much work and knowledge is required if one wants to understand. The question clearly arises for what you want to use hours and teachers: the teaching objectives. In literature classes, which are indispensable to my mind, the teachers are asked to help the young readers understand the texts. In case they have been trained respectively and love reading literature themselves they are capable of doing so. Only in a second step (without passing over the first one, for only by reading the original text identification with a humane view of man may come about!) it is about reviving the significance of this view of man, hopefully embedded in classical texts for ever. This is particularly important for our times in which human dignity seems to be forgotten. It does definitely not mean to shut away classical literature in a museum. Quite the opposite, the challenge is to make use of and to apply the great heritage of our culture for our modern times. From the encounter with literature courageous human beings draw inestimable insights. Young and old are requested to help that this may succeed. •

Essentials for the development of more social bonds

The significance of the personality of the teacher and of direct instruction to classes

by Ludwig Murtinger

Students with learning problems are often the object of discussion. They are of special concern to the well-trained teacher, regarding how one is to help them get over their problems and set them on the path to success – naturally a central pedagogical responsibility. Even in secondary grammar schools one of more often encounters students inadequately prepared for their A-level school years and therefore struggle with some problems. These particular pupils are one of the main objects of discussion in the teachers' room and on class or graduation conferences.

Of course in grammar schools, we find many students who have good or even very good competences and master their daily exercises successfully. Teachers are delighted in those students who are high-achieving; they are interested and participate in the lesson in a constructive way.

These pupils contribute to making the lessons lively and they are promoted in their development beyond the lesson as well; they take care themselves to receiving further impulses to support their ambitions to do well. In these situations as well it is important for the well-trained teacher to understand the character of the pupil and to be fair to him or her in his or her situation. The following is an example of such a situation as it occurs on a typical work day:

A 17-year-old female student, coming from a large Swiss city, enters the 4th year of the A-levels of a boarding school in the *Buenden* mountains. We describe Agnes' situation during the maths lesson: She participates enthusiastically during the lesson from the very first day of her arrival, asks questions, proposes solutions and when the lesson is over, she walks up to the teacher's desk and asks further questions to make sure that she understood everything correctly. The teacher is happy about her involvement and gladly gives her, as well as the other pupils, all information she requires. Agnes is an enrichment to the lesson, she is always prepared to answer when a question remains unanswered and the teacher gladly assists her in her goal to advance and be successful. Agnes is a good pupil, she is very good in maths and always gets very good grades, rarely under 5,5, and never under 5. It is clear that she has a good understanding of mathematical relations, her background is good and she likes to think in logical structures.

It quickly occurs to the maths teacher, however, who has some pedagogical train-

ing, that the student's activities are characterized by a certain restlessness. Those are not the activities of a student, who, out of pure interest, wants to learn things and once she has obtained the information she may sit back and relax or continue with the lesson. A student who is not able to take a more relaxed view of things. The maths teacher observes her restlessness, an insecurity which, through his support, she could only superficially overcome. Each and every single time, Agnes is one more unsure, whether she is at all and principally capable of understanding mathematical relations or solving problems which lead to a correct result. The actuality of her good to very good grades is not a relief to her. The effort she puts in before taking an exam bears no adequate proportion to her grades and to her intellectual and mathematical capabilities.

The importance of the class community

The maths teacher is especially motivated to maintain a good, constructive learning environment in the class. Due to painful experiences in his own school career but especially through recognizing what he learned from his studies and practical pedagogical and didactic training and further post-graduate psychological education, he knows that only a well-organized and directed lesson in an atmosphere free of fear is the adequate presupposition for the students to study. Adequate in the sense that those pupils who have difficulties can follow the lesson and that simultaneously those pupils who learn more easily are able to fully unfold their capabilities. For this teacher, it goes without saying that he responds to the personality of each individual student, to understand their individuality and to react to their personal situation appropriately. This happens at best in a lesson which is directed, which provides the occasion to address pupils with a personal request in the presence of the class and to react to this request in a professional way be it a well-intended correction of a mistake or an encouragement to participate, praise in the case of a good performance or a performed social action or a correction in case of a disruption. Of course, there is, from time to time, the necessity to take a student aside and speak with him about his personal situation in private. Even in these cases it can be either a talk aimed at correction or a situation to give special praise. The maths teacher often takes the opportunity to speak to the

pupils who have positively developed and show his pleasure when telling them about their development or encouraging them to stay on this path.

All this has nothing to do with individualisation of the lessons, something which is recently propagated by the educational experts. That which is being praised as appropriate for the student, is nothing but his or her isolation. Students are being left to themselves, they receive what is called a personalized learning program and receive no support from a professional educator. The integration in the class community which is so very important is completely omitted.

Back to Agnes. After one and a half years, while she had always had good grades, she now had to take a difficult examination in maths. Differential calculus, curve discussion, the development of functions, continuity, monotony, rules of derivation, maximum/minimum problems. Some people might remember that this concerns very challenging mathematical problems. In the examination Agnes had a very bad grade around a three. When the correction was done in class, it was clear to the teacher that the pupil would have great problems with it – especially because her grade was below the class average. He was prepared for several scenarios. What actually happened was that Agnes broke down. As she received her exam paper she just stared and did not change this posture during the entire lesson. She did not participate in the discussion of the examination tasks and was obviously completely absorbed in herself. After the lesson, she waited until the schoolmates had left the room and approached the teacher. She expressed the urgent wish to be allowed to repeat the exam, excused herself and explained why she couldn't learn adequately enough and indicated that she had not understood enough of the basic ideas of the subject matter. The teacher tried to calm her down and reminded her of her excellent grade average in which an exception would hardly make a noticeable difference and that the way to achieving her diploma was secure and that later on, she would barely remember this exam. Nothing helped. She did not calm down which didn't surprise the teacher. He often had observed that Agnes was convinced that she could only succeed with the best grades – without exception. If he

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Pro-Patria-Collection – Opportunity to usefully employ school children for charitable concerns

by Erika Vögeli

These days like every year, at post offices one finds the annual Federal Celebration badge of the Swiss Pro Patria Charitable Foundation. This year it is dedicated to the “fifth Switzerland”. The globe symbolizes the presence of 730,000 Swiss abroad. The emblem is produced in Switzerland and assembled in sheltered workshops in the east of Switzerland.

Many contemporaries are hardly aware what the badge is all about: The background is an initiative of some patriotic and charitable personalities who under *Albert Schuster's* leadership, a merchant of St. Gallen, marked the birth of the Swiss National Day Donation. By an annual collection on the occasion of the Swiss National Day the solidarity within the nation was to be promoted and the National Holiday to be given a deeper sense. Beyond the commemoration of the founding of Switzerland,

“to everybody, even to the modest citizen, the opportunity was [to be] given to make his mark to the national charity on August 1st”. At that time they deliberately wanted to counteract the National Holiday's loss of substance by “sparkling speeches, Alpine Fires and fireworks”.¹ They wanted to give it a deeper national and political meaning focused on the public welfare in order to promote national solidarity. This way the Swiss on 1st August 1910 could acquire the first National Holiday postcard of which the revenues were taken to help then the flood victims. Since 1923 additionally the Federal Celebration Badge was introduced, since 1938 as a third means to collect the National Holiday Stamp with a supplement – since 1952 no longer with the note “Bundesfeier” (National Holiday), but “*Pro Patria*”.

Each time the collection purposes with the consent of the Swiss Bundesrat (Swiss executive organ) were characterized by the

support of needy parts of the population and minorities. Also organisations who work for the common good like the *Red Cross* or the *Swiss Samaritanian Association* got a chance and until the 1980ies collections for “mothers in need” were conducted. Today, in times of a functioning welfare state, the meaning of such a collection is less conscious to us; however, the willingness of the Swiss to donate is again and again visible today when collections are conducted for catastrophes and other distresses.

Pro Patria operates without subsidies – a large network of volunteers support the work of the foundation: Every year there are thousands of volunteers, who as individuals, couples or groups by their association or school classes, with the help of their teachers sell stamps and the annual Federal Celebration Badges. Especially school chil-

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“Necessary fundamentals ...”

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gave in and allowed her to a repeat the exam, he would support Agnes in this ex-raneous feeling and encourage the exaggerated emphasis on her exam grades. Fully relying on their good relationship he said to Agnes with a calm and serious voice: “It doesn't help you to discuss this grade with me. Repeating the exam would not solve the problem, and I will tell you, Agnes: If you manage to accept this grade calmly, it will help you to become a stronger personality. Failures are part of life.” Then he said goodbye.

The impact of this short conversation on the girl's behaviour is strong and sustainable. In the following Agnes takes part in the lessons much more calmly but still eagerly. Her interest has not changed and her pleasure in logical thinking is still clearly discernable. Agnes is generally more relaxed and gay and the “assurance talks” after lessons are getting less frequent. She achieves well and has good grades again and her grade average is still high. Finally, after one and a half year Agnes graduates successfully as her teacher had always expected. On the occasion of the graduation celebration Agnes approaches her teacher and addresses him: “Once you told me, when I received a low grade, that I should just accept it, it would make me stronger. I immediately understood what you said and it really calmed me down. It did make me stronger and I want to

thank you for supporting me this way. I believe I will never forget that through all my life.”

The importance of the teacher's personality

The effect of this brief talk in the middle of the pupil's 5th form can only be explained on the background of the atmosphere which the teacher had been able to attain with his class. It would surely not have been possible to approach Agnes in this way in the first few days after her arrival at school. Trust had to be built up, trust towards the teacher as well as security in the class community. A class community, in which one can feel safe, is essential and, for pupils with personal problems, yields an almost therapeutic effect.

Developing such a community is the teacher's central task, ideally the class teacher's, but also every trained specially-subject teacher is encouraged to work in this direction. The teacher represents a model to the class, he shows the adolescents how one can deal with mistakes and takes a stand in the case of negative situations, without moralizing but in a clear way showing what the values are that peaceful community requires and he shows his joy about good performances without exalting the involved students and generally the students understand that this teacher gladly comes to teach them in their class.

The current reform intentions to disband the class community and devalue its importance for the development of the

children and adolescents is the absolute opposite. Instead of the teacher acting as the model for conveying values, posters, for example, are stuck to the wall, reading: “We listen to each other”, “We meet each other with respect”, “We are careful with the work materials” etc. This is a ridiculous claim. It is as if the carpenter, instead of sympathetically teaching his apprentice with the necessary clarity, hangs up posters on the wall: “We keep our workplace clean”, “We cut the wood straight”, “We are friendly to the customers” etc.

It is clear for the pedagogically trained teacher that his impact on the students is important for their success at school and for their personal development. He is the one who, while preparing the lesson, thinks about how to portray the prerequisite connections so that the students can optimally understand the lesson. He knows that he must be a model to the class and indicate the right direction whether it be discussion about the subject matter or whether it concerns the cooperation of the class community. Only in this way it can be achieved that we, when we let our adolescents depart at the end of their school career that their education has been comprehensive that they will be strengthened for their living in the community and that they will be equipped with the capability and knowledge necessary for their later career. And as the maths teacher, mentioned in this article, has often observed at post-graduate meetings, these students gladly remember their time at school. •

“Young people become aware – often for the first time in their lives – of the significance of a commitment to the community”

Interview with the president of Pro Patria, former Councilor of States and former Landammann* Carlo Schmid

Current Concerns: You have been President of the Swiss “Foundation Pro Patria” since 2009. What was your motivation to take on this function?

President Carlo Schmid: As head of the Education Department of Appenzell Innerrhoden I appreciate the activity of Pro Patria. Different projects of cultural significance in our Canton could not have been performed without the financial support of Pro Patria. The restoration and conservation of important monuments would not have been possible without Pro Patria. When I was asked to become the successor of *Felix Rosenberg* as the president of Pro Patria it was for me – in a sense – a duty of gratitude to take on this task.

* Title of the president of the cantonal executive

How would you describe the concerns of Pro Patria today? What are the main objectives?

Pro Patria helps morally and financially to realize cultural and social projects that create identity and contribute to understanding our history and nature and to solving social problems.

Pro Patria is committed in particular:

- to the preservation and maintenance of the Swiss cultural heritage
- to the preservation of valuable natural and cultural landscapes
- to permanent facilities for the promotion of cultural life
- to projects that combine the social and cultural objectives
- to projects that promote the youth’s awareness of our culture.

This year’s collection was launched on 8 May. What would Pro Patria like to accomplish this year?

The Pro Patria Collection 2014 is dedicated to the local and regional museums which represent the Swiss cultural history in their diversity and are so creating identity in our country. The Pro Patria collection 2014 wants to contribute spiritually and financially to make the history teaching of local and regional museums even more attractive through high-quality teaching methods and exhibition techniques. In particular smaller museums on their way into the 21st century are often urgently depending on contributions. That is the only way they can meet a demanding audience. The association of Swiss museums VMS is a partner of Pro

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dren can learn to have a share in caring for the common good (see also the interview with the president of *Pro Patria*). Thus in the school lessons the respective subjects can be linked with a meaningful charitable commitment. “And they can learn,” says *Pro Patria*, “that the mix of skills, organizational skills and humaneness gives pleasure.”² “The Federal Celebration Badge is a symbol of federal unity. At the same time it is an expression of solidarity and thus a special kind of “donation acknowledgement”.

Thanks to the two tradition-rich collections – Federal Celebration Badge and Pro Patria stamps – the non-profit work can

support numerous cultural and social projects morally and financially throughout Switzerland every year. In 2012 over 1.5 million Swiss francs were collected in the various appropriated funds that are available for historic preservation and cultural tasks, but also for social concerns. Since 1923 the *Swiss Foundation Pro Patria* has been the exclusive issuer of the tradition-rich Federal Celebration Badge.”³

Collection in 2014 favouring Swiss local and regional museums as well as youth projects of the “Fifth Switzerland”

The collection’s focus shifted to topics such as natural and cultural landscapes,



cultural history in its surprising variety and fascinating colourfulness, thereby creating identity in our country. According to *Carlo Schmid*, former member of the Council of States and former member of the cantonal government of Appenzell Innerrhoden and current president of *Pro Patria*, there is a vivid interest in the social and economic life of the past, regardless of the membership of a particular social class or age group. This confirms the great demand. “Local and regional museums open a door to history, often for the first time to children and young people – and *Pro Patria* feels particularly committed to them – and helps ripen the understanding in young people that without a past there is neither a present nor a future.”⁴

¹ from the Letter of the Initiators (17 April 1909) to the Swiss Oberpostdirektion (quoted according Pro Patria)

² www.propatria.ch

³ Press release from 20. Juni 2013

⁴ Aktuell Nr. 59/2013, S. 2

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Patria. The Swiss Post publishes special stamps with appropriate subjects.

Many volunteers but also school groups contribute to the sale of these stamps and 1 August badges making a contribution to the collection. Apart from the fact that this is a form of collection that meets with sympathies everywhere, it is also an opportunity for teachers to raise awareness among children and young people for the existence of Pro Patria. Where would you put a special emphasis in this context?

The schools have always been a central pillar in fund-raising for Pro Patria, by making collections from house to house,

as well as on streets and squares. Thus, the awareness of our culture and our history is to be promoted among young people – as we pointed out already.

The involvement of our youth under the guidance of teachers has also an educational importance – socially and politically – that should not be underestimated. Young people become aware – often for the first time in their lives – of what it means to commit themselves to the community. These collections yield no personal advantage and profit. Collecting for Pro Patria means more than generating donations. The personal commitment of the individual student or the individual pupil goes far beyond the purely functional fundraising; it means standing up for a concern and is of other quality than

professional “fundraising” and “donation marketing”.

Are there certain requirements for schools or teachers who want to engage in the collection with their classes? Does Pro Patria offer documents for this purpose?

The collections are possible for all school classes of primary and secondary education. On the homepage of the Pro Patria you can find valuable advice for the collecting (www.propatria.ch > *volunteer network* > *schools*). The secretariat is also happy to provide information under mail@propatria.ch or +41 44 265 11 60.

Mr former Landammann Schmid, thank you very much for the interview. •

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