

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*

Twisting the knife in the wound: How some states take advantage of Lebanon's weakness for its own interests

by Karin Leukefeld, Bonn and Damascus

The blast in Beirut on 4 August 2020 killed more than 200 people, thousands were injured, hundreds are still missing, and tens of thousands lost their homes, businesses and livelihoods. Even more people have to bear heavy damages on and in their houses and apartments due to the enormous shock wave, only few have the money for the necessary repairs.

Since autumn 2019, the Lebanese economy has been on a downward trend, dragging the Lebanese pound down with it. This development is due to decades of mismanagement and corruption by the ruling clan elites. In addition, there are the ever tightening economic coercive measures and sanctions imposed on Lebanon's economic and financial sector, with which the European Union and the United States aim at isolating Syria and breaking it politically. They affect Lebanon and all the states in the region economically closely intertwined with the country.

Many Lebanese lost their jobs and their savings even before the blast in the port of Beirut. Tens of thousands don't know how to feed themselves and their families. Since March, Lebanon has been suffering from increasing numbers of corona infections. The country has been subjected to a strict lockdown, schools and universities,



Beirut before the explosion. The affected warehouse can be seen in the picture on the left. (picture ma)

“The blast in the port of Beirut left Lebanon collapsing under a heavy load. But instead of helping and giving the country room for a new start, Lebanon is being kicked. What the governments in Paris, Berlin and Washington are promoting through the media as ‘helpfulness’ and ‘solidarity’ is nothing more than twisting the knife in Lebanon’s open wounds.”



(picture Tilo Gräser)

ef. Independent journalist *Karin Leukefeld* was born in 1954 in Stuttgart and has studied ethnology, islamology and political sciences. She has been reporting from the Extended Middle East for daily and

weekly journals as well as German state sponsored radio programmes since the year 2000. She was accredited in Syria in 2010 and has been reporting on the Syria conflict since then. Since the beginning of the war in 2011 she moves back and forth between Damascus, Beirut, other places in the Arab world and

her hometown Bonn. She has published several books, such as “Syrien zwischen Schatten und Licht – Geschichte und Geschichten von 1916-2016. Menschen erzählen von ihrem zerrissenen Land (Syria Between Light and Shadow – History and Stories 1916–2016. People Narrate about their War-torn Country.)” (2016, Rotpunkt edition Zurich); “Flächenbrand Syrien, Irak, die Arabische Welt und der Islamische Staa” (Surface Fire Syria, Iraq, the Arab World and the Islamic State.) (2015, 3rd edition 2017, PapyRossa edition, Cologne). Her new book will be released soon: “Im Auge des Orkans: Syrien, der Nahe Osten und die Entstehung einer neuen Weltordnung” (In the Eye of the Hurricane: Syria, the Middle East and the Rise of a New World Order (2020, PapyRossa edition, Cologne).

stores, companies and craftsmen had to close. The airport of Beirut – the second gateway to the world for the cedar state after the port of Beirut – had been closed for three months. The health system was already at its limit before the blasts in the port of Beirut, and now, the clinics have to cope with even more victims.

Besides the Lebanese, more than one million Syrian refugees are affected, 40 of whom lost their lives in the port blast alone. In addition, there are Palestinian refugees who have been roaming around the Levant, the eastern Mediterranean, in search of protection since various wars and their expulsion in 1948, 1967 and 1973. The UN organisation for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, speaks of official-

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ly 200,000 Palestinians whom it cares for in Lebanon. In fact, the figure is likely to be around 500,000 if the Palestinians are included who fled Iraq in 2003 when US troops invaded. And those who fled Syria in 2012 when the jihadists aiming at overthrowing the government in Damascus did not even stop at the Palestinian camps in Yarmuk, Daraa, Aleppo and elsewhere.

The severe economic and financial crisis in Lebanon is accompanied by a massive political crisis leading to social upheaval and the formation of camps. This in turn leads to distrust, rivalry and struggles for power.

International investigation as a leverage

The fires in the port of Beirut had not yet been extinguished, nor had all the dead been recovered, when *Amnesty International* and *Human Rights Watch* called for an international investigation of the blasts. The protest movement took up the demand, and quickly the old fronts reappeared. The old elites and clans, from Christians to Druze and Muslims, took up the demand of Western human rights agencies and turned to their sponsors in France, Germany and the USA for help.

Current Prime Minister *Hassan Diab* and President *Michel Aoun* rejected international interference and announced that Lebanon would ask for support but would itself present an investigation report.

The response of the "street" was prompt: Ministries were stormed, gallows were set up and politicians were symbolically hung from there. The government resigned and announced new elections. However, the violent demonstrators demanded a complete overthrow and – like *Amnesty* and *Human Rights Watch* – an international investigation into who was responsible for the explosions.

The sequence of the blast to be followed on video first showed a column of smoke above the harbour, which indicated a fire not far from the prominent large grain silo. Sparks flashed, many thought of ammunition or fireworks having caught fire. Suddenly, however, a huge white, spherical cloud expanded, from the centre of which a huge explosion shot out. Then a brown-pink-red-orange column of smoke rose into the sky. About ten seconds later, the huge shock wave followed.

Speculations about how the blast might have occurred have been circulating since day one. Many are convinced that it was not the first small fire, but an external impact that caused the explosion. Several Lebanese claimed to have seen airplanes over the port before the explosion. Some even thought they saw missiles being fired

at the site of the fire. Others still wondered how the first fire ever started and how the first blast occurred. One interviewee stated that the second blast could have been caused horizontally by a missile being fired into the fire underwater. Further considerations concluded that an explosive could have been triggered by a time fuse or by remote ignition.

Immediately after the explosion, Israel felt compelled to make a statement. Israel didn't do it, said an unnamed "official" according to the Israeli reporter *Gili Cohen*. "Not every blast in the Middle East has something to do with us," the message continued. This is usually a way of the Israeli Defense "to explain something". Israeli Defense Minister *Gabi Ashkenazi*, former head of the Israeli Armed Forces, stated on the same evening on TV station *Keshet 12* that it was probably an "accident".

Presumably, intelligence from all four corners of the earth have still been active in Lebanon looking for contacts to army and security circles, both officially and unofficially and in disguise, and that they found them – for cash. The danger of the cargo had been repeatedly referred to, and this should not have escaped the attention of intelligence circles. There was enough time to make plans of all kinds with the material.

Maybe less than 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate exploded? Because hundreds of tons had possibly already found their way into the war in Syria on the known smuggling routes? In exchange for cash payment?

Furthermore, there is the question to be answered why in 2013 an obviously unseaworthy ship set sail at all to bring such an amount of explosive material to Mozambique? Why did the ship head for the port of Beirut and not for the port of Mersin in southern Turkey? Why had the ship been lying in the port of Beirut for so long as a "ticking time bomb", where did the ship owner disappear to, why had there not been an investigation into the events surrounding this ship long ago? There are many more questions to be answered.

Scapegoat Hezbollah

Meanwhile, interested parties are spreading their own explanations. First and foremost Israel, which is currently working on either tightening or ending the mandate for *UNIFIL*, the UN peacekeeping mission along the border between Israel and Lebanon. A few days ago Prime Minister *Benjamin Netanyahu* and Defense Minister *Ashkenazi* claimed that *Hezbollah* was behind the explosion.

"To avoid disasters like the one in the port of Beirut, we must confiscate the explosives and missiles that *Hezbollah* has hidden in Lebanon's inhabited areas,"

Netanyahu said according to "Jerusalem Post".

If *UNIFIL's* mission was not tightened in this way, the Israeli army would have to be allowed to operate on Lebanese territory in order to track down *Hezbollah* arms caches. *Ashkenazi* had brought twelve UN Security Council ambassadors to the Lebanese border to underline Israel's concern: "Israel cannot remain inactive in the face of *Hezbollah's* attempts to attack Israeli sovereignty and its citizens," *Ashkenazi* said.

"*Hezbollah* operates in urban and inhabited areas using Lebanese citizens as human shields. We have seen this in the unfortunate incident in which hundreds of innocent Lebanese civilians were injured last week," said the defense minister. Obviously, the blast in the port of Beirut was meant.

French *MP Meyer Habib* made a speech during a debate on the status of Palestine at the National Assembly in Paris.

German CDU politician *Elmar Brok* picked up the ball and expressed in an interview with *Deutschlandfunk* radio that *Hezbollah* "stored these chemicals there because *Hezbollah*, but also Iran, had prepared explosive material from these products for attacks in the past".

Hezbollah Secretary General *Hassan Nasrallah* had already made it clear in his public address on 7 August that "*Hezbollah* has no missiles, no ammunition, nothing" in the port of Beirut. *Hezbollah* neither had control over the port nor did it have any influence on its authorities, *Nasrallah* continued. The investigation would reveal the truth about the explosion. He called on the Lebanese people not to believe rumors.

The blast in the port of Beirut is used to push own interests against Lebanon and its sovereignty. France, Germany and the USA promised to help, provided there were fundamental political reforms. The approximately 250 million euros collected by European states, the USA and some Gulf states were not to be handed over to the government and its institutions, but to the civilian population and non-governmental organisations. The statement said, that an international, independent investigation was necessary and supported.

German Foreign Minister *Heiko Maas*, who visited the ruins in the port of Beirut shortly after French President *Emmanuel Macron*, demonstratively presented a check for one million euros to the *Lebanese Red Cross*. There is no more obvious humiliation for the government and the president and the people of a country in such a situation. Only a few hours after *Maas*, *David Hale*, former US Ambassador to Beirut and now Deputy US Secretary of State for Political Affairs in the

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“Double standards” are a political impasse

Reflections for a different understanding of politics

by Karl-Jürgen Müller

From our media we can learn quite a bit about moral failure in world politics. It is interesting to note that some of this is associated with the demand for political “consequences”; while others, which from the perspective of political morality alone could not be less criticised, are not. Thus, citizens repeatedly stumble upon the “double standards” of politics – and of our media as well. Politicians and the media who act morally lose their credibility in the process ... and are not helpful in any other way.

At present, two places of world affairs are receiving special attention: Belarus and Lebanon.

Presidential elections took place in Belarus a good two weeks ago. It is claimed that the official results of the elections were falsified. After the announcement of the election results there were protests and after the first protests an intervention – also violent – by the police. The protests continue to this day. The EU decided on sanctions and did not recognise the election results. At present, “analyses” and comments on the situation in Belarus can be found almost daily. There are strong calls for a change of government (regime change). “Lukashenko’s days are numbered” was the headline on the first page of the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung” on 22 August 2020.

Belarus and Lebanon

In Lebanon’s capital Beirut, a stockpile with a highly explosive substance blew up three weeks ago. The explosion devastated an entire district of the city. There were many dead and injured. 300,000 people

are now said to be homeless. Although it is not yet clear how exactly the explosion in the depot occurred, and although there is also the thesis of a missile bombardment, our media and our politicians quickly agreed that this explosion, as well as the long-lasting, fierce protests in the country, are the responsibility of the country’s parties and politicians. According to the front page of a well-known Swiss daily newspaper now “the West”, must “help Lebanon”. French President *Macron*, the president of the former colonial power, has already been to Beirut. Also the German Foreign Minister *Heiko Maas*. He demanded “reforms” as a requirement for “aid”.

This is not to answer the question of what is really going on in Belarus or Lebanon. One could also mention other countries. In any case, the fact is that “our” politics and “our” media have long disagreed with these two countries. As a rule, some kind of political and moral upheaval is given as a reason for this. For example, there are numerous indications that the slogan that in Belarus it is all about a freedom-loving people rebelling against an inhuman dictator falls short.

But also India ...

The question of how honest the political-moral argumentation is, becomes even more pressing when looking at other places of world events. Places where no one among “us” thinks of calling for “reforms”, changes of government, sanctions or even a “humanitarian intervention”. Take India, for example: The “Neue Zürcher Zeitung” headlined on 5 August 2020: “A betrayal of Kashmiri”. The

subtitle read: “The Indian government wants to use force to make the Muslims in the Himalayan region cower in obedience”. The article gives four affected Kashmiris a chance to speak, and introduces as follows: “It is a year since the Indian government surprisingly withdrew the special status of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Since then, the Muslim population in the Kashmir high valley has lived in a state of emergency. Some of the most prominent politicians of the Himalayan region are still in prison or under house arrest, among them the former head of government *Mehbuba Mufti*”.

The reader also learns that there was a months-long curfew, that the Internet was cut off by the Indian state on the eve of the state’s change of status, and that so far 118 “insurgents” have been killed by Indian security forces (army and police). 13,000 of the citizens arrested since August 2019 were still in prison. At the end of the article, a 29-year-old journalist speaks. She writes: “We journalists in Kashmir have been working under incredibly difficult conditions for a year. [...] I have spent a lot of time thinking about what I can and cannot write. We are constantly being watched and we are at risk. [...] I weigh my words and thoughts and sometimes practice self-censorship. I believe it is important to be free and not imprisoned. Only in this way can I continue to tell the stories the world needs to know about Kashmir. And for that, I need to be up to date and out there instead of languishing in prison”.

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US State Department, flew in. He was followed by the French Secretary of Defense, *Florence Parly*.

In contrast, China, Russia and Iran are offering help, but they remain politically in the background. The battle between Europe and the USA for Lebanon is in full swing. France wants to rebuild the port of Beirut, Germany wants to take over the power supply (for *Siemens*), the USA want to establish Lebanon’s maritime border with Israel, so that Israel – and thus US companies – can profit more from the gas fields in the eastern Mediterranean than they are entitled to. The European states want to prevent further flows of refugees and use several million to ensure that people stay in the country and somehow survive.

Lebanon as a sovereign state is being ignored and weakened by foreign actors as it has been for decades. The actors’ long-standing partners – political elites and clans – which were strengthened and formed under the French mandate (1920-1943) are to be brought back into play in a new constellation, if they are willing to adopt the demands of the “civil society” supported by the West.

Hezbollah, which had only emerged in the early 1980s as a resistance to the Israeli occupation, is not to be included. It is to be marginalised and fought against as the main culprit for the situation in Lebanon.

The cedar state is supposed to submit to the rules of the IMF, privatising state enterprises and stopping state subsidies. Tens of thousands of so far still state employees and workers would lose their jobs

and would not find new employment because there is neither significant industry nor agricultural production in Lebanon. Costs for electricity, for example, which are subsidised today, would multiply for ordinary consumers. The USA, however, would like to keep banker *Riad Salamé*, head of the Lebanese Central Bank since 1993 and responsible for the criminal plundering of the private accounts of the Lebanese population, untouched as the “red line”.

The blast in the port of Beirut left Lebanon collapsing under a heavy load. But instead of helping and giving the country room for a new start, Lebanon is being kicked. What the governments in Paris, Berlin and Washington are promoting through the media as “helpfulness” and “solidarity” is nothing more than twisting the knife in Lebanon’s open wounds. •

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... and the Middle East

Second example: Middle East. In August 2020, the award-winning Irish author *Colum McCann*, who lives in New York, published a non-fiction novel about an Israeli and a Palestinian with the renowned *Rowohlt* publishing house in German translation. Both the Israeli and the Palestinian have lost their 14- and 10-year-old daughters in an act of violence: the Israeli by Palestinian suicide bombers, the Palestinian by an Israeli police operation in the West Bank. But both fathers have not given in to hatred and revenge. They work in the Israeli-Palestinian peace movement. The book has the title “Apeiron”. The word is of Greek origin and in geometry it denotes a surface with almost infinite sides. In his preliminary remarks the author writes: “Readers familiar with the political situation in Israel and the Palestinian territories will find that the two driving forces in this novel, *Bassam Aramin* and *Rami Elhanan*, are real people. By ‘real’ I mean that their stories – and the stories of their daughters *Abir Aramin* and *Smadar Elhanan* – are extensively documented in film and press”.

The Palestinian Bassam Aramin, as the reader learns very early on in the novel, spent seven years in an Israeli prison as an adolescent and young man, it was said that he was a “terrorist”. On page 35 you can read: “His fellow prisoners liked his quiet manner. There was something mysterious about the seventeen-year-old with the walking disability, about his dark skin, his wiry strength, his silence. He was always the first to step forward when the guards came into the canteen. The limp gave him an advantage. The first one or two cane blows came almost hesitantly. Often he was the only prisoner who stopped. Bassam spent many weeks in the infirmary. The doctors and nurses were worse than the guards. He literally smelled their frustration. They pushed and beat him, shaved off his beard, denied him medication, put his water out of reach. The Druze keepers were particularly cruel: they knew the Muslims’ attitude to the naked body, their sense of shame. They took away his clothes and bedding, tied his hands behind his back so that he could not cover himself’. ... And so on, and so on.

Why “double standards”?

Of course the same applies to India and Israel as to Belarus and Lebanon. The author of these lines does not know the exact circumstances and contexts – besides, the description of Israel and Palestine is “only” from a novel. But as I said before: Nobody in “our” media or in “our” politics demanded or is demanding chang-

es of government in India or Israel or even “measures” against these two countries. How can this be explained?

What is certain is that the political-moral argumentation is very patchy. What is considered morally reprehensible in one case is reported and described in the other case ... but sometimes with, sometimes without the demand for “consequences”. Is it so absurd to speak of “double standards” and to come up with the idea that in reality it is not at all about “values” and morals, but about something completely different?

The loss of credibility

Just as important is the question of the consequences of these “double standards”. There are people – and they are not the worst – who draw the conclusion from all this that “our” policy has lost all credibility. The conclusion is not unreasonable. And it has serious consequences. A social coexistence beyond a totalitarian power state requires mutual trust, “good faith” in each other. “Trust is good, control is better”, this saying may have its justification in some areas, but for a good coexistence it is ambivalent. This is not the way to create sustainable peace, neither within a country nor in international relations.

No more wondering about strange things

Some people are surprised at the unrealistic claims and demands made during the (mass) events that have been going on for weeks against the government measures to combat the corona pandemic and the completely exaggerated invocation of a “right of resistance” by the participants in the demonstration. But one need not be so surprised. “Our” politics and “our” media have themselves contributed a great deal to the fact that they have lost a great deal of credibility. “Once you lie, you don’t believe them, even if they speak the truth.” This saying is already 2000 years old and is attributed to a Roman slave released by Emperor Augustus. This basic mood still exists today – and today it is abused and instrumentalised by political pied pipers.

Is the conclusion to be drawn from all this that “our” politicians and “our” media should in future point the moral index finger everywhere? No, that would be an aberration. It would be better to deal with morals in a much more modest and restrained way. And it would not be bad at all to start with oneself with morality, if at all. And it would probably be best to stop making mistakes that have been made and recognised as such in the future.

Politics must limit itself ...

For politics, a return to limitations would be desirable: helping to increase the well-being of one’s own citizens, above all by

providing good conditions for a life of self-responsibility, free development of the personality and dedicated to the common good; not causing harm to people in other countries; being able to defend oneself against possible attacks by others if the worst comes to the worst; stopping interfering in the internal affairs of other countries. It is not the task of politics and the state to be the mouthpiece of human conscience. A unilateral or multilateral world government policy would be nothing more than a world dictatorship.

The world has indeed been further along, including our modern world. But the striving for power of a few has caused regressions. Also in world politics. For example, the *Charter of Paris* adopted by the OSCE states in November 1990 provided a good basis for a prosperous coexistence of East and West after the end of the Cold War. Russia and also China, for example, were countries that made many attempts in the years that followed to reach agreements with the United States and its allies in Europe that aimed at equal coexistence in a multipolar world.

... and say goodbye to pure power politics

In contrast, the United States pursued the strategy of the “only world power”. This can still be read in the 1999 German-language classic by former US security adviser *Zbigniew Brzezinski*, “The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy And Its Geostrategic Imperatives”. This book also argues that from the US perspective, access to Eastern Europe and the Near and Middle East should be the most important building blocks for weakening Russia and China in the long run. The words were matched by the deeds: the expansion of NATO to the East, the five billion US dollars for the “democratisation” of Ukraine, the many wars in the Middle East, the US support for radical Uyghurs, money and advice for the opposition movement in Hong Kong, setting fire to all the places where the “New Silk Road” is supposed to run ... and so on, and so on.

Whether the reactions of Russia and China have always been appropriate is open to debate. But it is surely certain that both countries would still prefer to take up honest peace offers from the USA and the European states rather than wage a new Cold War. Both countries have for some time been primarily interested in domestic reconstruction, not in aggressive adventures.

The fact that the USA and also Europe are currently in decline cannot be blamed on other states. The European misery does not consist in a lack of weapons, as is repeatedly claimed. The European

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“In Europe the power games of the time before the First World War become repetitive”

Winners and losers in Brussels

by Zoltán Kiszelly, Budapest



Zoltán Kiszelly
(picture ma)

following interesting commentary on the Summit.

cc. In *Current Concerns* No. 16 of 8 August 2020 we briefly reported on the decisions taken by the EU summit on 21 July. Zoltán Kiszelly is an advisor to the Hungarian Government. He has provided us with the following interesting commentary on the Summit.

In Brussels, every Member State has won. Some more, some less. The big ones have won the most. Germany can keep its economic backyard, the EU, and thus remains in the same weight category as China and the USA. The French got the Transfer Union as the anteroom of the “joint finance minister”. The Italians have received more helicopter money, while the thrifty four have secured bigger discounts. The nine states outside the euro zone have to send less money to the South and what is most important for us Hungarians is that we have gained time in which our country is becoming stronger.

In Europe, the power games of the time before the First World War become repetitive. The stakes are still high. Germany wants to keep the EU together. To do so it must bind the two large member states which have remained after the leave of the British. The French will decide in 2022, the Italians in 2023 at the latest, not only on the composition of their government, but also directly on the future of the euro and the EU.

Indeed, Brexit has opened up an alternative that we don't yet know where it will lead, but at least it is an alternative. The French have already “done well” with the Anglo-Saxons twice, while *Napoleon III's* deal with *Bismarck* cost the French emperor not only the crown, but also Alsace and Lorraine.

Italians always start wars with Germany and end them with the victors. Don't underestimate the power of history!

Berlin would not have been able to keep these two large Member States in line with its current thrifty policy. Chancellor *Merkel* has therefore assigned the role of “bad cop” to Dutch Prime Minister *Rutte*. Together with *Macron*, she was thus able to slip into the intermediary role and at the same time consolidate the recently divergent German-French axis.

This mediation was more in demand than ever. The structural reforms, long overdue and necessary, which the northern states are demanding in return for their money, would sweep away the euro-optimistic governments of the south. *Macron's* popularity is already extremely bad, while the poll ratings for the right-wing Italian parties are at 50%, and in seven out of 20 regions, elections take place in autumn.

The southern part of the euro zone will be kept afloat this year by bond purchases by the ECB and the Target 2 mechanism. From January 2021, this can be undertaken by the now adopted plan for a *Next Generation EU* and the new EU budget. The agreement was so urgent because of this schedule. Therefore, Chancellor *Merkel* was prepared to make almost any concession

While most are looking forward to the helicopter money, it is taken note of it with confidence in Berlin and Paris that the transfer union has still taken place.

Now the poorer states can be supported by the richer ones along the lines of interstate fiscal adjustment and other mechanisms. In another reading, only a one-year trade surplus of the northern states has been redistributed.

To repay the common debts, the European Parliament (EP) would like to introduce new common revenues and taxes, which could soon be coordinated by a “European finance minister”. Just as the EP swallowed the farewell to the lead candidate model last year, it will, as expected, accept the cut of a political budgetary power. As compensation, one could increase the money for *Erasmus* or climate protection a little.

As long as the de facto Eurobonds of the *euro zone+* remain a truly one-off borrowing, there are more arguments for than against them. The money will be distributed by Brussels. It has to be used for digitisation, climate-neutral energy generation, competitiveness and for investments. And this is a good thing.

It is the merit of the Visegrad states and *Viktor Orbán*, the longest-serving head of government beside *Angela Merkel* and *Mark Rutte* that no arbitrarily interpretable ideological conditions have been run into economic specifications. This could be one of the reasons, why mainstream Hungary and its prime minister are among the big winners of this EU summit. •

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Federal Referendum of 27 September 2020 on Limitation Initiative

Stop salami tactics to integrate Switzerland into EU Yes to independent regulation of Swiss affairs

by Dr iur. Marianne Wüthrich

On 7 August, we could read in the CH media press that “The Federal Council is out in force against the limitation initiative”, underscored by photos of four Federal Councillors who want to “launch an offensive” against the initiative.¹

What an explosive issue this must be to make the Federal Councillors turn away from their duty to provide proper information and instead go on an actual propaganda tour. Alone Karin Keller-Sutter, who some time ago put the fight against the limitation initiative at the top of her agenda, will appear at ten events, Alain Berset wants to cover the French-speaking part of Switzerland, and also Ignazio Cassis will campaign for a “nay” to the popular initiative.

First of all, it is important to record what you can actually read in the initiative text and what is being freely invented by EU turbos. Then the initiative also has to be placed in the context of the struggle of many citizens against those forces in the state and the economy which are openly joining forces with the EU bodies, in order to integrate Switzerland ever more closely into the undemocratic bureaucratic colossus.

From this point of view, the rejection of the initiative by the people would be yet another slice of the salami – i.e. the paring back of Switzerland’s unique state structure, down to a narrow remnant. But above all, a nay would pave the way for the next, much thicker slice, which the united EU turbos are enthusiastically setting their sights on: the institutional framework

“Double standards’ ...”

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NATO states alone spend much more on their armies than Russia, for example. In the case of Russia in 2019, the figure was around 65 billion US dollars; Great Britain, France and Germany together spent almost 150 billion. The plight of Europe is the lack of truly independent politics. Such a policy could indicate that the states of Europe would be better off with a good relationship with all countries in the world than with a direct or indirect implementation of previous US confrontation plans.

This would also include recognising that the “double standards” of our policies and our media have been and continue to be an important part of our policies. This policy is in a dead end. Ever more of the old will not help.

Wording of the popular initiative “For a moderate immigration (limitation initiative)”

The Federal Constitution is amended as follows:

Art. 121b Immigration without free movement of persons:

- 1 Switzerland shall regulate the immigration of foreign nationals independently.
- 2 No new international treaties or other new obligations under international law may be concluded that grant foreign nationals the free movement of persons.
- 3 Existing international treaties and other obligations under international law may not be adapted or extended in contradiction to paragraphs 1 and 2.

Art. 197 No. 121

12 Transitional provisions to Art. 121b (Immigration without free movement of persons):

- 1 The objective of the negotiations should be to ensure that the Agreement on the free movement of persons of 21 June 1999 between the Swiss Confederation, of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States, of the other, is repealed within twelve months of the adoption of Article 121b by the people and the cantons.
- 2 Failing that, the Federal Council shall terminate the Agreement in accordance with paragraph 1 within a further 30 days.

(Translation Current Concerns)

agreement that would be on the table immediately after 27 September.

What the initiative demands...

In principle, it merely demands that the mass immigration initiative should finally be implemented. This initiative was accepted by the people and the cantons on 9 February 2014 and has since been part of the Federal Constitution (see the wording of the limitation initiative in the box) Article 121a, paragraph 1, of the 2014 Federal Constitution says, “Switzerland shall regulate the immigration of foreign nationals autonomously”, and the draft for Article 121b paragraph 1 says almost literally the same. Both articles prohibit international treaties that “violate this article” or that “grant foreign nationals the free movement of persons”.

According to the constitutional article of 2014, residence permits for foreigners must

be limited by annual maximum numbers and quotas. This regulation, which is clear and comprehensible to everyone, was – in open disregard of the will of the people – not implemented by parliament and the Federal Council, “because Brussels did not agree to it” – a weak justification for our elected representatives’ constitutional breach.

And as the initiators of that time are being accused of not having clearly formulated what would happen to the *Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons* (FMPA) if the EU did not accept the Swiss implementation, the transitional provision now states explicitly that the Federal Council is to suspend the FMPA in negotiations with the EU within one year of the initiative being accepted by the people; in the event of a failure to reach agreement, it is to terminate it within 30 days.

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Begrenzungs-
Initiative
am 27. September

JA+ zur
massvollen
Zuwanderung

www.begrenzungsinitiative.ch

Votingposter for the Limitation Initiative

"Stop salami tactics ..."

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... and what the opponents falsely claim

- "If the initiative were accepted, the Bilateral Agreements I would disappear" (Federal Councillor Keller-Sutter).²

Jo chasch dänkä (Swiss for "my foot!") – they would not disappear just like that, even though – especially our own team! – is diligently disseminating the killer argument that the other six agreements would expire six months after the termination of the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons. The EU member states have the greatest interest in preserving some of the treaties that are highly important to them, above all the Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons itself, which they would certainly rather have modified than not have at all – even if they do not admit this – not for love or money. It is well known that every year many more workers, students, professors (including family members for the purpose of reunification) pour into Switzerland than vice versa, and hundreds of thousands of cross-border commuters come here every day.

The outgoing EU ambassador in Bern, *Michael Matthiessen*, may repeat as long as he likes his well-known argument that whoever wants to have direct access to the internal market must

also participate in the free movement of persons.³ Switzerland has been participating for years and will gladly continue to do so, but not without limits!

- "In addition, there is the risk that the abolition of the Bilaterals I would also call into question the Schengen and Dublin association agreements. This would have further consequences - first and foremost for security and the asylum system, but also for border traffic and our freedom of travel." (Federal Councillor Keller-Sutter)

In the same spirit, EU Ambassador *Michael Matthiessen* says, "In the Corona crisis we saw what it means when you can no longer move freely in Europe. Open borders and the free movement of persons have many advantages that we take for granted".

Here, Ms. Federal Councillor and Mr. EU Ambassador are „topsy-turvy“ things: the Schengen/Dublin Agreement is one of the Bilateral Agreements II and has nothing to do with the free movement of persons. The freedom to travel around Europe and the right to live, work and receive social benefits in a state of one's choice are two completely different things. So if the EU wanted to suspend Schengen/Dublin because Switzerland is not doing its bit elsewhere, that would be against the law and against the treaty. It is true that we already have some experience with this kind of thing, but so far the Federal Council has always found a clever

er way to deal with the illegal actions of Brussels.

- "If we want to aggravate this [Corona] crisis, we will cut off our companies' access to the EU internal market. Fifty percent of our exports go to the EU!" (Federal Councillor Keller-Sutter)⁴

Ms. Federal Councillor forgot to add: ... and sixty percent of our imports come from the EU! Incidentally, the legal basis for trade between Switzerland and the EU is primarily the 1972 free trade agreement, which is essential for the Swiss economy. The Federal Council wisely never mentions it, because its "modernisation", i.e. its EU-compatible re-functioning and subordination to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Justice ECJ has already been preordained in the planned framework agreement.⁵

- The Federal Council and the social partners have "done a great deal to ensure that the domestic workforce remains competitive". (Federal Councillor Keller-Sutter)

Then she mentions the only measly regulation that remained at the end of the parliament's EU-compatible implementation of the mass immigration initiative, namely a job registration obligation for employers (but only for professions with high unemployment) to the Regional Employment Placement Centers (RAV), before they are allowed to directly look for workers abroad.

- "Without foreign workers, the companies would simply not be able to process their orders". (Hans-Ulrich Bigler, Director of the Swiss Trade Association SGV)⁶

This wording is grotesque: as if anyone no longer wanted foreign workers! The initiators and we citizens neither want to throw out foreigners living here nor to let no more in – we just want to be able again to decide how many new foreigners can come in (as we deal with non-EU-Efta-citizens).

- The goal of the initiators is not to limit immigration, but "to abolish the accompanying measures". The initiative would put more pressure on wages. (Pierre-Yves Maillard, President of the Swiss Federation of Trade Unions SGB)⁷

More pressure on wages? Would there not rather be less pressure, if fewer immigrants were to compete with the domestic workforce (Swiss and foreigners)? How absurd can one be, just because a social democrat does not

Do you need a framework agreement for a joint Corona app?

mw. "The corona virus knows no borders." This is the first sentence of a letter that four members of the Bundestag from Baden-Württemberg sent to EU Commission President *Ursula von der Leyen*. They want Switzerland to have their tracing-Apps connected with the tracing-Apps in EU countries. Yes, of course – what's the problem?

The legal basis for Swiss participation is missing, according to the resigning EU ambassador in Bern, *Michael Matthiessen*: Without a bilateral health agreement, there would be no EU-compatible corona warning system for Switzerland, and without "significant progress" on the framework agreement, no health agreement.¹

The four politicians from our neighborhood on the other side of the Rhine oppose such a link and demand immediate cooperation with Switzerland on Corona apps from the EU Commission. In their letter they refer to the 300,000 cross-border commuters from France, Germany, Italy and Austria, including around 46,000 from southern Germa-

ny, who cross the border to Switzerland every day. "Cross-border living and working in our region, as in many other border regions in Europe, regardless of the EU's external border, is not the exception, but the rule," write Schwab and his three CDU party colleagues.²

Bravo! Let's resume the tried and tested, uncomplicated cooperation with our neighbouring countries! It is absurd to have to conclude a formal agreement with EU headquarters for every situation that life entails, which would then be incorporated into the ominous framework agreement. Over time, practically all areas of Swiss law would then be set from Brussels and approved by the European Court of Justice.

There is still time to stop.

¹ Gafafer, Tobias. EU ambassador: The second Swiss contribution to cohesion is long overdue, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 14 August 2020

² Hehli, Simon. The pressure on Brussels is increasing. Switzerland should be allowed to connect to the European Corona apps, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 17 August 2020

"Stop salami tactics ..."

continued from page 7

want to support an SVP initiative under any circumstances?

Switzerland is a small country!

Since the introduction of the free movement of persons agreement with the EU in 2007, around 75,000 people have immigrated to Switzerland every year, which means a total of 1 million (today's population is around 8,5 million). Over 25 percent of our population are foreign nationals; that is more than in most European countries. If unregulated immigration from the EU states continued, we would have a Swiss population of 10 million in a few years' time.

Never mind, imagines the think tank *Avenir Suisse*: "Anyone who fears, in view of such figures, that the last green spaces in the Swiss midlands will inevitably be built up and that the open spaces in the Alps will be endangered, will find reassurance with the following thought experiment: If you put New York in place of Zurich, London in place of Basel, Berlin in place of Berne, Paris in place of Geneva and Barcelona in place of Lugano, Switzerland would have 24 million inhabitants with these attractive metropolises of the Western world alone. In the remaining areas, there would thus be enormous room for the cultivation of traditional lifestyles that are spared from 'density stress', for abundant agricultural land, for local recreation areas and for sparsely populated mountain landscapes. So the question is not whether Switzerland can tolerate 10 or 11 million inhabitants, but how to organise this higher density. [...]"⁸

Not very tempting, isn't it?

In their argumentarium, the initiators counter such visions of the future with various weighty reasons, for example: If we say yes, Switzerland will not be concreted over any further, we will not be bogged down any further in traffic jams or congested trains, and living will become cheaper again. We will also protect the social welfare system: Today, 6 out of 10 welfare recipients are foreigners.⁹

Such arguments should also appeal to trade unionists and the Greens ...

But there is still hope, because *Avenir Suisse* author *Lukas Rühli* complains: "Admittedly, Switzerland does not have the optimal basic conditions for this [for

organising the higher density described above]: The small-scale federalism (26 cantons) and almost 2300 municipalities with a high degree of municipal autonomy make coherent planning in functional areas difficult".

Let us keep it that way! It is best if we citizens continue to organise Switzerland ourselves, on the basis of direct democracy, federalism and communal autonomy! Let us have as little legal adoption from Brussels and jurisdiction from Luxembourg as possible ...

Big test for the upcoming referendum on the Framework Agreement

Back to the big chunk on the agenda after the smaller one of the limitation initiative – the institutional framework agreement. Brussels and our own negotiating team want to impose this on the Swiss people. And it is due to the framework agreement that four Federal Councillors are joining forces with the leaders of all our political parties (with the exception of the SVP, from which the initiative originated) and most of our business associations to with might and main prevent an "aye" of the Swiss people on 27 September. Now already, the electorate is to be worn down with the disadvantages threatening us from Brussels if we dared to agree to the limitation initiative. We will hear of the same disadvantages – and some more – before the vote on the Framework Agreement.

The vote on the limitation initiative is a "landmark decision", said Federal Councillor Keller-Sutter on 22 June, and after this Switzerland must "make an offer [on the Framework Agreement] to Brussels". The "offer" apparently refers to the generous injection of billions into the EU's Cohesion Fund – something that Ambassador Michael Matthiessen recently insisted on in the form of an ultimatum.¹⁰ Incidentally, Switzerland would have paid the next installment long ago if the EU had not imposed illegal sanctions on us (the last of which was the lockdown from the EU stock exchanges). It is only for this reason that the National Council and the Council of States have so far put payment on hold.

The fact is: If the Swiss negotiating team remembered which side of the table they should sit at, there would certainly be more to get out of the negotiations than has been the case so far, namely more than nothing. According to SVP President *Albert Rösti*, there would surely be a certain

"hue and cry", if the initiative were to be approved, but he thinks that the EU would offer its hand in finding an amicable solution, because: "The six agreements concerned out of a total of over 120 [for example, overland transport, research, trade in agricultural products such as wine and cheese] are more important for the EU or at least as important to them as they are for us."¹¹

On 27 September we Swiss will have the opportunity to stake our claim towards the EU. In the words of the initiators: "Switzerland wants to conclude independent treaties with other states, that benefit both sides. Switzerland also needs foreign workers – but as a sovereign state, we ourselves decide who comes to our country"¹² What is wrong with that?

¹ Altermatt, Sven. Bundesrat zieht mit Grossaufgebot gegen Begrenzungsinitiative ins Feld – und erhält gar Schützenhilfe von der SVP. (The Federal Council is out in force against the limitation initiative – and even receives support from the SVP) *CH Media* of 7 August 2020

² Washington, Oliver. Abstimmungskampf neu lanciert. Vereinte Front gegen die Begrenzungsinitiative. (Voting campaign newly launched. United Front against the Limitation Initiative.) *Media conference. SRF News* of 22 June 2020

³ Gafafer, Tobias. EU Ambassador: "Der zweite Schweizer Kohäsionsbeitrag ist seit langem überfällig" (The second Swiss cohesion contribution is long overdue), in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 14 August 2020

⁴ *Media conference on the limitation initiative* of 22 June 2020. Speech by Federal Councillor Keller-Sutter (<https://www.ejpd.admin.ch/ejpd/de/home/aktuell/reden>)

⁵ Institutional Agreement, Preamble and Joint Declaration EU-Switzerland on Trade Agreements, p.32-34 (in German), https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/de/documents/abkommen/accord-inst-Projet-de-texte_.pdf

⁶ Washington, Oliver. Abstimmungskampf neu lanciert. Vereinte Front gegen die Begrenzungsinitiative. (Voting campaign relaunched. United Front against the Limitation Initiative.) *Media conference. SRF News* of 22 June 2020

⁷ ibid

⁸ Rühli, Lukas. "Die 10-Millionen-Schweiz – Switzerland of the 10 million." *Avenir Suisse* of 30 August 2016

⁹ Yes to the limitation initiative. Argumentarium (only in German) (<https://www.begrenzungsinitiative.ch/argumente/>)

¹⁰ Gafafer, Tobias. EU Ambassador: „Der zweite Schweizer Kohäsionsbeitrag ist seit langem überfällig“ (The second Swiss cohesion contribution is long overdue), in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 14 August 2020

¹¹ Schäfer, Fabian; Surber, Michael. Eine Zuwanderung von ein paar zehntausend Personen im Jahr kann auch nach Annahme der BGI nötig sein“. (The immigration of a few tens of thousands of people per year may be necessary even after acceptance of the BGI). Interview with Albert Rösti, in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 14 July 2020

¹² Yes to the Limitation Initiative. *Argumentation* (<https://www.begrenzungsinitiative.ch/argumente/>)

Yes to a law “for the long-term coexistence on Man and Wolf”

by Stefan Engler*, CVP Council of State and Vice President of the Committee “YES to a progressive Hunting Law”

The current hunting law is valid since 1985. Since then, many things have changed: For example, the number of protected species such as the wolf or the beaver has increased, which is good. This is a good sign for nature and species diversity in Switzerland.

However, increased number of wolves also leads to issues for example in agriculture, tourism and amongst citizens. To better respond to the increasing wildlife stock and to protect the needs for both humans and animals, it is necessary to update the hunting law. This is gratifying.

The revised hunting law serves to protect various wild animals and their habitats. Furthermore, it offers a pragmatic solution to handling the wolves, which returned to Switzerland in 1995. The wolf population is growing consistently; there were 80 wolves living in our country in 2019.

Some wolves prey on sheep and goats and kill 300 - 500 animals annually. Herds protected by fences or dogs are affected as well because wolves learn to circumvent those protective measures. Also, some wolves lose fear of civilisation. The revised hunting law aims at smoothing conflicts that appear with the increased number of the wolf population.

Better Protection of Nature

The revised law provides several improvements for wild animals and their habitat. Reserves and protected areas,

servicing the animals as areas of retreat, as well as wildlife corridors will be funded with additional resources. Over 300 wildlife corridors are protected against construction throughout the whole of Switzerland. This way, their habitat is increased and connected. Wildlife corridors, including bridges and underpasses for roads and train tracks, will be cared for by the federal government and the cantons.

The improvement of habitats for wild animals and birds, accomplished by the cantons in 80 confederate wild life protected areas and bird reservations, is supported financially by the federal government. Twelve wild duck species are not to be hunted at all in the future. Additionally, the hunting season for the woodcock will be decreased. The law obliges cantons and

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This is how many animals were killed by wolves within a few days in the canton of Grisons alone



*Hunting and fishing authorities
(canton of Grisons)*

21 August 2020 Splügen: Wolf tears 2 sheep

- In the night of August 20th, 2 sheep were torn by a wolf on Stutzalp. The flock was protected. The torn sheep were about 700m away from the corral without protection.

17 August 2020 Obersaxen/Mundaun: Wolf tears 3 sheep

- On 16 August, 3 sheep were torn by a wolf on the alp Gren. The herd was protected. The torn sheep were about 600m away from the corral without protection.

17 August 2020 Medel (Lucmagn): Wolf tears 2 sheep

- On 16 August, 2 sheep were torn by a wolf on the alp Gannartesch. The flock was protected. The torn sheep were about 150m - 400m away from the corral without protection.

16 August 2020 Surses: Wolf tears 1 sheep

- On 15 August 2020, a wolf tore 1 sheep on Ziteil. The sheep was outside the fence.

16 August 2020 Splügen: Wolf tears 4 sheep

- On 15 August, 4 sheep were torn by a wolf on Stutzalp. The flock was protected. The torn sheep were about 700m away from the corral without protection.

15 August 2020 Pontresina-Val Roseg / Clavadels: Wolf uses 1 calf

- On 14 August, a newborn calf from a suckler cow herd was found heavily used. The use was probably by a wolf. Further investigations were initiated.

15 August 2020 Vals: Wolf tears 1 sheep

- During the night of 15 August, a wolf on Alp Calasa near Vals killed 1 sheep. The farm animals were protected. The torn sheep was outside the fence.

(Translation Current Concerns)

What is the hunting law about?

by Monika Fry

Just as the ibex, the heraldic animal of the Bündnerland (canton of Grisons), is regulated in its population, the new hunting act should also be able to regulate the wolf population so that mountain and alpine farming, hiking and much more will continue to be possible. If wolves reproduce as they do now, there is a risk that many farmers will give up their farms because they are at the mercy of the phenomenon that they cannot protect their animals from wolf attacks despite herd protection measures. The farmers are attached to their animals and it hurts them to find the animals, which often have to be given “the coup de grace” (i.e. killed) after wolf attacks, seriously injured on their pas-

tures. In the first half of 2020 there were already 120 livestock cracks in the canton of Grisons; in 2016 there were 50 per year. But these are only the losses of the clearly proven cases. Animals that flee, fall, or are no longer found as a result of wolf attacks, are not counted. In a short time two more wolf packs were found in the canton of Grisons, inevitably many more will follow. Hardly anyone can imagine what the abandonment of caring for the mountain landscape cultivated over centuries would mean. When everything is washed away, beautiful mountain meadows and our extensive network of hiking trails disappear. It is only thanks to the constant work of the farmers and the pasturing of sheep,

cattle and goats that many accesses to the Alps are open to us at all.

In a longer perspective, the spread of the wolf means that, in addition to the loss of alpine pasture land for the summering animals due to scrub encroachment, the characteristic cultural landscape for leisure, recreation and tourism as well as the plant and animal biodiversity will be lost. Even the Swiss Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) says that if the Hunting Act is adopted, the wolf populations will continue to grow. So it is in no way a „shooting law“, as the environmental protection associations call it, but a sensible intervention to enable people to live together at all.

"Yes to a law ..."

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farmers to build wildlife friendly fences to decrease accidents and injury to the wild animals. These measures serve the diversity of species: they help to preserve the natural habitat of these animals and to protect nature itself.

Pragmatism in handling the wolf

The revised hunting law enables the cantons to regulate the wolf stocks, before wolves attack sheep and goats. However, the wolf remains a protected animal. The goal of this change of law is to keep the wolves' natural timidity towards civilisation, to lower the damages to sheep and goat herds and thus decrease the amount of conflicts.

The core aspect of the new law is that the executive responsibility in regulating protected species now lies in the hands of the respective cantons. Cantons know the area in which the predator lives. They are familiar with the routes of wolf packs. They support herd protection. They are in contact with the victims, and first and foremost, it is the cantonal gamekeepers who, if need be, have to pull the trigger. An intervention by gamekeepers is only permitted when measures to prevent damage alone do not suffice.

The cantons are obliged to exhaust all possible measures before they interfere by shooting the wild life stock. We know from experience that protective measures alone are not enough when wolf packs are evolving. Wolves learn quickly how to avoid herd protection mechanisms. In

order to keep them intimidated to settlements and protective structures, it is necessary to occasionally cull single wolves in a pack.

Grazing animals in the mountain valleys are the most ecologic form of domestication and must be maintained in the future. Herds need to be protected by adequate measures as long as they are realistic and reasonable - herein lies agriculture's contribution. The hunters also have to adapt to new competitors and environmental circumstances.

The new law builds a framework for a long-term coexistence of human and wolf. It deserves our approval. That is why I say with conviction: YES to the new hunting law!

Source: *Swissinfo*, 31 July 2020(Translation *Current Concerns*)**Hunting Laws – most important planned changes**

Federal Act on Hunting and the Protection of Wild Mammals and Birds (Swiss Hunting Law, JSG), amendment of 27 September 2019 (extracts)

Section 7a, Regulation of guarded species

- 1) Following a BAFU hearing, cantons can plan a stock regulation for:
 - a) Ibexes: between 1 August and 30 November;
 - b) Wolves: between 1 September and 31 January;
 - c) other protected animal species which the Bundesrat declares needing to be regulated.
- 2) Such regulations must not endanger the stock of the wildlife population and must be necessary for:
 - a) protection of the environment or preservation of species diversity;
 - b) prevention of damage or a severe threat to human beings; or
 - c) preservation of regionally adequate wildlife stock.
- 3) Based on program agreements, the federal government grants global financial assistance to the cantons regarding the costs of supervision and implementation of measures for species described in paragraph 1.

Section 12 para. 2, 4, 5 and 6

- 2) They [the cantons] can order or allow measures against single protected or huntable animals at any time, if the subject displays behavioural problems, inflicts damage or is considered a severe threat to human beings. Only eligible hunters and supervisory institutions may be contracted for the implementation of those measures. According to section 12 of the "Natur- und Heimatschutzgesetz (NHG)" (Nature and Cultural Heritage Protection Act) from 1 July 1966, there is no right of appeal against decrees regarding huntable animals [but there is against wolves! mw].
- 4) Suspended
- 5) The federal government funds and coordinates the measures of the cantons regarding prevention of wildlife damage caused by:
 - a) big predators on domestic livestock;
 - b) beavers on buildings and structures that lie in the public interest, and on opening paths for agricultural companies or on embankments which are of meaning for high water safety;
 - c) otters on fish farms.

- 6) The federal government can contract entities of public law or privateers with the implementation of tasks described in paragraph 5.

Section 13 para. 4 and 5

- 4) The federal government and the cantons participate in the compensation of damage on the forest, agricultural cultures and domestic livestock caused by animals of certain protected species, if the tolerable measures to preserve wildlife damage have been taken. The Bundesrat determines these protected species after hearing the cantons as well as the requirements for liability to pay compensations.
- 5) If the damage is caused by beavers, in addition to par. 4, the federal government and the cantons participate in the compensation of damage on buildings and structures that lie in the public interest, and on opening paths for agricultural companies or on embankments which are of meaning for high water safety. Compensations may only be provided if the tolerable measures to preserve wildlife damage have been taken.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

People's Republic of Donetsk: The path of an unrecognised state outside the borders of globalism

by Miroslava Dimitrova*



Miroslava Dimitrova
(picture ODDR)

At midnight on 27 July 2020, a complete and comprehensive ceasefire began in Donbas. This had been agreed on by Ukraine, Russia and the OSCE within the Trilateral Contact Group. The ceasefire is to be main-

tained, until the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine has been fully resolved. The People's Republic of Donetsk (DPR) called this step a breakthrough. Russia also reacted positively to the negotiation of the measures. For the first time, this agreement was also signed by Ukraine.

Is the fulfillment of the Minsk agreements the final goal that the republics in the Donbas are really striving for? What visions do they have for their future? About these and other issues we had talks in Donetsk with the "Donetsk Republic" social movement Central Executive Committee chairman, *Alexei Muratov*, with the Minister of Economic Development of the DPR *Alexei Polovyan*, and with the Chairman of the People's Chamber, *Alexander Koffman*.

The People's Republic of Donetsk declared itself an independent republic in 2014, after the national referendum held in the same year. Since then it has been held in international political economic blockade and isolation. Although the republic has created its own constitution based on the principle of popular rule and although it has begun building its own social system, the international community does not accept its choice. Despite the fact that the Republic has all the characteristics of state control over its territory, an administrative system with an efficient state apparatus and de facto sovereignty, it does not have international diplomatic recognition and thus cannot de jure become a subject of international relations. As in the case of the other post-Soviet unrecognised states, the international community takes a harsh stance and places the principle of the inviolability of borders above the principle of the right to self-determination.

Socioeconomic upturn of the People's Republic of Donetsk

Despite international isolation and ongoing military conflict, the People's Republic of Donetsk has not only established its rule of law with independent institutions and the separation of powers during its six years of existence; it has also developed an economy based on the principles of the welfare state, a development that makes the unrecognised republic a pioneer of today's resistance to globalism. The political model of government of the People's Republic is democratic, but has no party participation. It is a nation state that functions outside the system of globalism with economic success despite war.

Political Model of the People's Republic of Donetsk

According to the constitution adopted on 14 May 2014, the People's Republic of Donetsk is a democratic social republic under the rule of law. The form of government can be described as a presidential republic. There are no active political parties in the DPR. The functions of political parties are performed by social organisations. There are two larger than the others – "Republic of Donetsk" and "Free Donbass".

The leader of the "Republic of Donetsk" movement is the head of state of the People's Republic of Donetsk, *Denis Pushilin*. The role of social movements in the Republic's political life is described by *Alexei Muratov*, head of the Central Executive Committee of the public movement "Republic of Donetsk", in the following interview.

Miroslava Dimitrova: Mr. Muratov, would you briefly explain the government model of the DPR for us? In modern Europe we are not familiar with a government without participation of political parties. What are the advantages of this model over the political model of liberal democracy?

Alexei Muratov: What are political parties for? Political parties mainly fight for power. We need no power. The public movement differs from political parties in that it is an association of people who have come together to find a common solution for the goals and tasks of a society. When we united in 2014, social movements came into being, to decide what our future path should be. This was the time of the military coup and the Maidan. Peo-

ple appeared in public and decided that our future, our way should be the integration into the Russian Federation. Today the social movement "Republic of Donetsk" has more than 210,000 activists, that is first of all people with an active attitude towards life, who create order with their own hands, who build the state and build bridges to the Russian Federation, in accordance with the decisions we made in 2014.

Do you have a model, an example from the past that you would like to emulate, or is the republic's model of government the first pioneer in world history?

There are enough examples of popular rule. Today we have a People's Republic. According to the constitution, the people are the source of power. Within the movement we have a variety of activities, but above all we give to the people the tools of self-regulation, i.e. the instruments of democracy. We also have interesting projects such as the control by the people, where the people themselves have the opportunity to participate and control the authorities. We cooperate with all categories of citizens – with elderly people as well as with young people, with students, with soldiers, with all others. We have a constitution, and therefore the power, the government, lies with the people. In the West, power is in the hands of the political parties, so the people are not at the center of the decisions. Political parties represent the interests of certain categories in society. There the decisions are made in the leadership circles. We have a social movement. In our country all citizens participate in public organisation and can actively make decisions on all issues.

The economic Development of the Republic

The People's Republic of Donetsk is an industrially highly developed country. The events of recent years have led to a sharp decline in industrial production. Problems related to the destruction of infrastructure and lack of working capital hinder the technological development of the economy. At the same time, however, the metallurgical industry, the production of coke and coke products, the manufacture

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"People's Republic of Donetsk ..."

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of certain types of technical products, the food industry, the chemical industry and certain types of building materials remain competitive. According to a number of economic indicators, the Republic recorded economic growth in 2019. The People's Republic of Donetsk is a welfare state. Health and education are free, mineral resources and agricultural land belong to the state and the municipalities. The international economic blockade is an obstacle to the development of the national economy. However, efforts are being made to increase economic growth, to attract foreign investors in order to secure jobs, to maintain and develop infrastructure and to develop the country.

We also discussed the plans for the development of the economy of the republic with Alexei Polovyan, Minister of Economic Development of the DPR.

What are the main objectives of the strategy of economic development of the DPR?

Alexei Polovyan: Under the present conditions, the main goal of the Republic is to improve the pop-

ulation's well-being. Consideration should be given to increasing the economy's productivity, to an efficient use of human capital, innovative, technological and natural resources for production of goods and services, to solving the problems of modernisation of production as well as ensuring sustainable development of the Republic's economy as the main source of an increase in competitiveness of the DPR economy.

What is the role of the welfare state in the DPR's economy?

The idea of the welfare state is at the center of the formation of our republic, and this fact is confirmed by - stable tariffs for housing and communal services for the population during the last five years, and - the increase of the average wage by more than twice over that of 2016, including the wages of workers in education and health care.

In addition, the Republic's leadership plans to further improve the well-being of the population. Starting this year, the salaries of public sector employees, pensioners and

other socially disadvantaged groups will be gradually increased.

Much attention is also paid to young people in our republic and they are guaranteed the right to higher education. The republic also demonstrates the functions of a welfare state in its programme of humanitarian aid and environmental protection for the Donbass regions controlled by Ukraine. Free medical and educational services are provided, benefits are paid to veterans and separated families, invalids, children with disabilities and their families are supported. Human capital is an important resource of national wealth and a source of positive state transformation. The People's Republic of Donetsk is in an active phase of rebuilding key sectors of the national economy and of increasing production rates.

Positive changes are made possible precisely because of the high labour and intellectual potential of our citizens, their love for their homeland and their desire to preserve and increase the wealth of the Don land.

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"The LPR* and DPR deserve a chance"**

cc. We asked a Swiss expert on the situation in Ukraine and the Donbass to comment on the text by Miroslava Dimitrova. On 13 August he formulated the following points for us:

- "Promises to honour the ceasefire negotiated in Minsk have been made several times in the past, and they have hardly ever been observed for more than two weeks. The new commitment of 27 July has now lasted for more than three weeks. There is no doubt that the Ukrainian army is also responsible for breaks in the ceasefire. However, with reference to the uncertain security situation, Kiev had always delayed the implementation of the political provisions of the Minsk agreements. Now Zelensky is under pressure to act.
- The absence of political parties in the Donetsk People's Republic is the result of the deep mistrust of the established party system, which emerged in Ukraine well before 2013. The omnipresent corruption and the political circus of the oligarchs were the cause for this and still exist today. There are also forces that advocate direct democracy. *Alexander Zakharchenko*, former president of the DPR, who was killed in an assassination attempt at the end of August 2018, had shown sympathy for this.
- The Donbass is very rich in mineral resources, especially coal and steel. There is also a lot of know-how in the field of metallurgy, especially in the production of advanced alloys. Mechanical engineering is also a strong industry. Even before 2013, the people of the Donbass criticised that their region generates a considerable part of Ukraine's tax revenues, but that the bulk of the financial resources flow to Western Ukraine while the infrastructure in the Donbass is neglected. In the meantime, a large part of the economic enterprises are in great need of renovation and are unprofitable. The destruction of industry and commercial enterprises has become part of Ukraine's war against the Donbass. The total economic blockade of Ukraine against the People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk severely hinders economic development.
- In particular, the Petrovski and Trudovski districts in the southwest of Donetsk, which were built around a number of mines, were under artillery fire almost daily until 27 July 2020. The Ukrainian government's routinely circulated claim that the rebels were shelling their own residential areas or that an alleged third party was responsible was never credibly substantiated.
- The shelling of residential areas, the interruption of water and electricity supplies, witch hunts against "unpatriotic elements" and other measures taken by the Ukrainian government make a return of the People's Repub-

lics under Ukrainian control very unrealistic. Ukraine's corrupt and politically determined judicial system also gives rise to fear that anyone from the rebel republics could be arrested at any time on political grounds and dragged before a judge. The catastrophic human rights record of the Ukrainian law enforcement agencies speaks for itself here.

- With its fighting in the Donbass, the Ukrainian army tends to operate close to the border of war crimes every day. In some cases, war crimes can be proven. Blows against companies that supply the population with vital goods also give rise to the suspicion of systematic war against the population of the People's Republics. In this light, it is difficult to understand how the West is courting Zelensky today and how it courted *Poroshenko* in the past.
- Whether the People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk (DPR and LPR) are doing better than Ukraine in their efforts to promote democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and more, as well as in the fight against corruption, crime, and other evils, can hardly be answered conclusively due to a lack of information from the country. However, the yardstick is not exactly high in this comparison. The LPR and DPR deserve a chance".

* Lugansk People's Republic

** Donetsk People's Republic

(Translation Current Concerns)

"People's Republic of Donetsk ..."

continued from page 12

Life in times of crisis

On 12 February 2020 five years have passed since the signing of the Minsk Agreement, Minsk II. In the past year, numerous proposals for a solution to the conflict in the Donbass were discussed, such as the *Steinmeier* formula and the Munich resolution. Earlier this year, the situation in the region and the progress of the Minsk agreements were discussed in the UN Security Council, and there were talks in the Normandy format – Russia, Germany, France, Ukraine. On 21 July, both sides reached another ceasefire agreement.

However, during my stay in Donetsk, daily shelling from the front line, which is about 5 km from the city, can be heard. The city itself is quiet and safe, but the daily news from the front as well as reports from the OSCE show that not a day goes by without shelling and damage to houses, infrastructure, injuries to civilians and soldiers.

When asked about the effectiveness of the Minsk Agreement, our interlocutors replied as follows:

Alexei Muratov: For us, the Minsk Agreement is first and foremost a civilised divorce from Ukraine. We already made our choice in 2014. In order to gain recognition in all other countries, we now have the location in Minsk. With this algorithm we confirm our right to self-determination and our decision, which we made in 2014. Our choice is Russia.

Alexander Koffman: Did you hear the explosion this morning? That is the sound of the current Ukrainian government. During the period of Zelensky's leadership, there have been more victims among the population than in the same period last year under the leadership of Poroshenko. Therefore, I do not believe in the peaceful rhetoric of Ukraine, and I do not believe that we would be able to agree on anything with them.

Zelensky is a puppet, he does not make independent decisions. He had everything: the highest confidence level of 72%, the majority in the Verkhovna Rada, a government formed by himself, everything. He



Miners in the Zasyadko coal mine. (picture ODDR)

would have been able to end the war. But he did not do so. Therefore, we cannot consider Zelensky as relevant to international processes.

The Minsk Accords were needed in 2014 because they halted the advance of Ukrainian troops and put an end to the massive losses of the civilian population. However, the implementation of the Minsk Accords is not possible for Ukraine, as this would lead to a complete dismantling of Ukraine.

The Donbass election

The number of unrecognised countries in the world is growing, and at the same time there is a lack of active discussions in the international community to solve the problem. Will the People's Republic of Donetsk become a central point of attraction for the anti-globalist forces of the world and a precedent as the first recognised self-proclaimed republic? According to Alexander Koffman, Chairman of the People's Chamber of the DPR, Europe is called upon to recognise the choice of the DPR: "The use of unconventional weapons such as gas, nuclear weapons and phosphorus bombs is prohibited worldwide. In view of the Europe's defeat due to National Socialism 75 years ago, I am convinced that Europe would never return to this kind of weapons, but we must clearly understand that Ukraine is using this kind of weapons - genocide

against its own people. And as long as Europe or the USA do not realise this and do not consider it criminal, they will become criminals against humanity themselves".

A large part of the DPR population already has Russian passports, Russian is the official language in their republic, and the Russian ruble is their official currency. Donetsk has chosen Russia, and the country has deliberately taken this path. Donbass has itself determined its affiliation to the Russian sphere of influence. The Russian value system is based on principles such as historical continuity of generations, conservation, dissemination and development of national culture, education for patriotism, and a democratic and social state. All these values have already been forgotten in a large part of Europe.

Negotiations for a cease-fire are underway, but the recognition of a people's choice of civilisation is the remaining and the essential question. A choice that makes it impossible for a people to be integrated in a pro-liberal and global political and economic system such as the one currently in force in Ukraine. From today's point of view, it is rather unlikely that Europe will accept the choice of the people in Donetsk. But this unrecognised republic's success could become a step forward in the victory over globalism in the world. •

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

Letter to  the Editor

A lesson in “gap press”

Recently the *Redaktionsnetzwerk Deutschland* (Editorial Network Germany, RND), a subsidiary of the *Madsack media group* from Hanover, which sees itself with 200 employees as a supra-regional news portal, delivered a lesson in “gap press”. The prehistory: During the serious riots in Portland, Oregon, stores were looted, store windows and goods were destroyed, store owners who wanted to protect their property were dragged onto the streets and beaten. The federal government did not intervene for a long time, retreating to the position that only local law enforcement agencies were allowed to operate in Oregon. Finally, special forces without emblems were sent in which stopped the riots.

An RND employee had apparently read letters to the editor in the “Los Angeles Times” dealing with the issue. One reader¹, *David L. McDaniel* from Capistrano Beach, wrote: “Destroying property is not a peaceful protest. It is rioting. [...] I support the right to peacefully assemble, but [...] as a US citizen I am tired and disgusted with the coddling of these rioters by local politicians. Appeasement never works. [...]” As a German with an interest in history, such descriptions may remind you of the November pogroms of 1938, during which the police also stood by and watched men, mostly in SA uni-

forms, committing the most serious acts of violence and destruction. However, *Henryk M. Broder*, drawing this parallel after the Stuttgart riots, which took place at about the same time, was violently attacked and compared with *Goebbels* (“... has the potential to be the head of Reich’s propaganda etc.”).

A second letter to the editor² in the “Los Angeles Times”, by *Lois Winsen*, San Diego, stated: “I am old enough to remember how *Hitler* sent his jackbooted thugs out on what became known as *Kristallnacht*. The world watched in horror as Jews were dragged out into the streets and beaten. [...] Now the White House is doing something similar – sending out specialized federal units to wreak havoc and create chaos! [...]”

The RND only called the writer of the second letter to the editor and turned the telephone call into an article, which was printed under the title “94 years and worried as never before: The warnings of old Ms. Winsen” by several local newspapers, among others in Kiel, Lüneburg and Weißwasser in Saxony. The fact that the omission of the first letter to the editor creates a message that is completely wrong in terms of content and gives the impression that *Trump’s* special troops, like the SA at the time, looted and destroyed stores and attacked people was obviously intended to

be exactly that! Even unbalanced reporting can serve a certain purpose.

Hansjörg Rothe, Leipzig

¹ To the editor: Destroying property is not a peaceful protest. It is rioting. If anything, the federal government has held back in its response to the rioting in Portland and other cities where there is no longer civil discourse. I support the right to peacefully assemble but not to destroy people and property. As a U.S citizen, I am tired and disgusted with the coddling of these rioters by local politicians. Appeasement never works. It is seen as weakness by anarchists. Remember, feeding the tiger never works because the tiger eventually comes for you. (*David L. McDaniel*, Capistrano Beach)

² To the editor: I am old enough to remember when *Hitler* sent his jackbooted thugs out on what became known as *Kristallnacht*. The world watched in horror as Jews were dragged out into the streets and beaten. *Hitler’s* purpose was to create chaos and discrimination, to flex the muscles of the right-wing fascists who made up his base, and to stay in power. Now the White House is doing something similar: sending out specialized federal units to wreak havoc and create chaos and discrimination and flexing the muscles of *Trump’s* own white-supremacist base. It is unspeakable that this travesty is allowed to remain. First he came for the immigrants from Mexico. Then he came for refugees from the Middle East and Central America. Now he’s coming for cities with Democratic leadership. Whose freedoms will come under attack next? (*Lois Winsen*, San Diego)

The painful common currency, the euro

I would like to corroborate Professor *Hamer’s* article in *Current Concerns* No. 16 of 8 August 2020 with some thoughts.

The joint bond purchase by the 27 EU countries for 750 billion Euro shows us more and more what a long way from democracy this Politburo in Brussels is. After all, the Brussels headquarters naturally wants to know how the money is invested in the respective countries in a future-oriented manner or with the right political priorities and then controlled. These are countries that are far from Brussels, including their citizens, from Estonia to Portugal or from Ireland to Greece.

Lars Feld, the head of the economic wise men, puts one more thing on top and sees the EU on the way to becoming a federal state. Individual countries are no longer in a position to take responsibility themselves. *Marcel Fratzscher*, President of the *German Institute for Economic Research*, joins the same horn and welcomes the bond purchases as a step towards fiscal union (according to the “*Oberbergische Volkszeitung*” of 22 July 2020).

All this shows us that the EU is instrumentalising the corona crisis to undermine

the sovereignty of nation states. Europe is a continent with many, very different countries. The citizens of these countries have become 27 different states. It is the natural right of people with the same culture, tradition, history and language, or even a common will, to join together to form a community in the form of a constitutional state, a republic, and to refuse any form of external domination. The sovereignty of a democratic constitutional state also includes budgetary sovereignty on its own responsibility as the royal right of national parliaments.

Particularly, but not only in the southern countries, serious structural problems such as over-indebtedness of public budgets, high unemployment, and lack of competitiveness arose long before the corona pandemic. This was created by the painful single currency of the euro, accompanied by community indebtedness. If the national currencies had been retained, Greece, for example, would have been able to regain its competitiveness by devaluing the drachma.

Werner Voss, Wiehl (Germany)

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Hiroshima and Nagasaki

On the 75th anniversary of nuclear horror

by Manuel García Fonseca, Spain

A few months ago a Japanese couple living in Hiroshima came to our home. They voluntarily accompany visitors to the museum and to the city centre, where one of the greatest atrocities of the 20th century took place. It was an experience to spend a few days with survivors of Hiroshima who show the horror and support the physical, but above all the moral regeneration of the inhabitants of Hiroshima. They do not forget, they inform, and they do this with serenity and a moral greatness that is catching. Peace should make it impossible for the horror to be repeated.

Each year on the anniversary, the events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki are commemorated, and emotional events are organised to commemorate the victims – as if everything had been an accident of history. In doing so, it is forgotten that it was a deliberate act committed with full knowledge

of the damage it would cause and with absolute disregard for human suffering. The United States justified this monstrous act of terrorism by blaming the Japanese and presenting it as a necessary evil for a better future. However, neither the people who were in their homes were guilty, nor was a better world achieved; on the contrary, it brought terrible pain and unnecessary suffering to millions of people, and some of them are still suffering the consequences and dying from the late effects of radiation.

When I read and listen to the usual comments in the media, I find them so biased and unintelligible that I feel obliged to represent other, completely different views.

I was lucky to meet the American historian Gabriel Jackson on his visit to Gijón and hear him comment on one of his most

interesting and best documented books: “Civilisation and Barbarity in 20th century Europe”. I thought his reflections on this terrible event were very important. They inspired me to take a very different view from the one prevailing today, which has been and still is held by the US Administration.

The first thing that stands out is that the media talk about the anniversary of Hiroshima, but barely mention that three days later the second atomic bomb was dropped on the civilian population of Nagasaki without giving the Japanese government even the slightest chance to reconsider its position in the face of such unprecedented atrocious actions.

For Jackson, the most barbaric acts of the century were those perpetrated by Na-

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The peace bell also sounds in Volgograd

Every year on 6 August in the Volgograd Panorama Museum “Battle of Stalingrad” a ceremony is held in memory of the civilians of the twin city Hiroshima who died in the atomic bombing of 1945. Today, on the 75th anniversary of one of the most terrible days in the history of mankind, the peace bell, which was presented to Volgograd by the city of Hiroshima, sounded again in the hero city. The event was attended by the chairman of the Volgograd City Duma Vladlen Kolesnikov and the chairman of the Volgograd Regional Department of the Russian Peace Foundation, honorary citizen of Volgograd and Hiroshima Yuri Starovatykh.

After the bell was struck three times at 8:15 a.m. – the time when the bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 – the participants in the ceremony honored the memory of the victims of the atomic bombing with a minute of silence. Afterwards, fresh flowers were laid down at the foot of the bell.

“Seventy-five years ago, the atomic bomb on Hiroshima wiped out an entire city – with residential areas, families, the elderly and children. Stalingrad also experienced the full horror of war during the Second World War: our city became the scene of the most severe battle in the history of mankind and was destroyed to the ground. A tragic fate united Volgograd and Hiroshima and in 1972 became the basis for the signing of the Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation. Since then this friendship has not been interrupted, and one of



The peace bell in the Volgograd Panorama Museum. (picture city Volgograd)

the central streets of Volgograd is named after Hiroshima,” said Vladlen Kolesnikov, chairman of the Volgograd City Duma.

He emphasised that Volgograd and Hiroshima are united today by working for the good of the world. Volgograd holds the vice-presidency of the largest international organisation “Mayors for Peace” based in Hiroshima. One of the most important joint projects of cities in the field of peoples diplomacy is the International Youth Conference for a peaceful future.¹ “Together with our partners from Hiroshima and other cities, we speak out against war and will always do so. We will do everything possible to ensure that new generations never

have to experience tragedies like those of Hiroshima and Stalingrad. That is why the peace alarm is sounding again today in Volgograd,” said Yuri Starovatykh.

This year the memorial events on 6 August will be restricted worldwide due to the Corona pandemic. Therefore, no representatives from Hiroshima could participate in the commemoration ceremony in Volgograd. A video message was sent to the Japanese twin city instead.

On 6 and 9 August 1945, two atomic bombs were dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The explosion and the subsequent radioactive contamination of the area killed about 300,000 people. This was the first and last use of nuclear weapons in history. Ten years later, on 6 August 1955, the first world conference to ban nuclear weapons was held in Hiroshima; the city itself has become an eternal symbol of the struggle against weapons of mass destruction. Hiroshima Memorial Day is celebrated by the international community as World Day for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The world should remember the human tragedy and unite the efforts of the world communities to prevent wars at all. •

¹ This year, young people from seven cities around the world came together in a video flash mob; they all had an origami crane folded out of paper as a sign of solidarity; according to Japanese culture, the wings of the crane carry souls to paradise. (note *Current Concerns*)

Source: www.volgsovet.ru/d1d0/Activity/PressRelease/i18126 from 6 August 2020 (Translation *Current Concerns*)

Victims of the atomic bomb (Poem of the mother)

On the morning of 6 August at 8:15 am.
There were four of us,
the four-year-old Masahiro,
the two-year-old Sadako,
Grandmother and me.

The air-raid warning was withdrawn at
7.30 am,
relieved we had settled down for break-
fast.

A blinding flash.

The shock wave rattled the house,
the walls crashed down,
enormous clouds of dust in the room,
we could no longer see anything.

I called for my children.

Masahiro crawled from the dining table
to me.

His head was covered in blood.

Where is Sadako?

Sadako couldn't be seen.

Desperately I searched for her, followed
her screaming voice.

Sadako simply was blown away,
dashed onto the coal box.

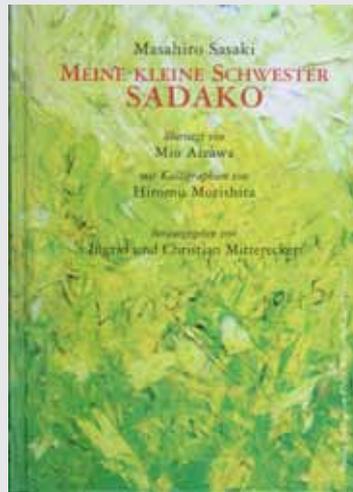
She sobbed convulsively, but was without
a scratch.

In grandmother's left hand, a chopstick
was sticking.

Ah, we are all alive!*

Let's flee! Hurry up, Grandma! We ran
out of the house.

Outside, the whole town was burning,
I took the two children by the hands,



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the sack on my shoulder,
and I ran with grandmother like crazy
on the levelled roofs
towards the Ota River.

We ran and ran,
dodging people,
people lying dead under the broken-down
houses,
we avoided the glances of the people,
people who were burnt straying around
with their skin hanging down.

The whole city on the run,
a sea of fire,
full of corpses and stench.

I wanted to swear that I was still alive.

Grandmother said she had forgotten
something in the house.

The two children on her hands,
I couldn't stop her.
She went back. The flames, higher and
higher.

That was the last time I saw grandmother.

The three of us kept on running,
clinging to each other like mad.

At the Sanjo Bridge we met a friend,
he let us on his boat.

Immediately both banks were filled with
people
looking for help
and with corpses.

He could not move the boat from the
place.

And we had nothing else to do but wait
for the fire to die down.

While we were emptying the leaking boat,
black rain was pouring down at about ten
o'clock.

The next day
we brought the white bones of the grand-
mother cremated.

Grandmother died in the pond in front of
the house,
where she had sought shelter from the
flames.

At the temple in Kabermachi
we were given my cousin's legacy.

Due to the atomic bomb, twelve lives
were lost.

* Sadako died in 1955 of the atomic bomb
disease – leukaemia.

(Translation Current Concerns)

"Hiroshima and Nagasaki"

continued from page 15

zism and Stalinism and the two atomic bombs dropped on cities. The cruel nuclear weapon was deliberately used against the civilian population in order to achieve the greatest possible effect, i.e. the greatest possible number of civilian deaths (today there are already more than two million people), in order to create the greatest possible terror. Jackson makes a detailed critical analysis of the various official justifications for this genocide and presents alternative options for a deterrent nuclear operation that could have been carried out without civilian casualties. The demand for the unconditional surrender which served as the American justification for the use of the nuclear bomb did not prevent the United States from finally accepting the main condition on which the Japanese had insisted: that the Emperor should not be forced to abdicate and that he should not be brought to justice as a war criminal. If this condition had been accepted beforehand, the Japanese government would have capitulated without the atomic bomb being dropped.

But to blame the American people for such a decision would be unfair and wrong. The American democracy, as *Eisenhower* himself warned, is dominated by the military industrial complex. I quote the impressive thoughts with which Jackson ends his analysis:

"To me, as an American serving as a military cartographer at the time, it seemed like a 'war crime', and in the (more than) half century since then I have never read a convincing explanation why a test could not be carried out in an uninhabited or sparsely populated area to save human lives, and not just those of American soldiers.

Under the specific circumstances of August 1945, the use of the atomic bomb showed that a psychologically very normal and democratically elected chief executive could use the weapon just as the Nazi dictator would have used it. In this way, the United States – for anyone concerned with moral distinctions in the conduct of different types of government – blurred the difference between fascism and democracy."

A second observation on the central notions disseminated in official and rul-

ing leading media is that of the threat to humanity from the possible use of nuclear weapons by other countries, especially those of the Third World. There is talk of the nuclear threat that assumes that Russia, Pakistan, India or above all North Korea or Iran are in possession of the nuclear weapon. The country that, irrespective of international agreements, is most likely to threaten the use of nuclear weapons, namely Israel, is often not mentioned. And nothing is said about the views and inclination of high-placed political and military officials in the United States to even use nuclear weapons as a deterrent. And above all, the government that deliberately and intentionally took the decision to commit the appalling genocide is not called to account, either legally or morally.

It is not enough to remember the victims; the executioners cannot be forgiven either, as long as they continue to justify what cannot be justified, as long as they do not ask the victims for forgiveness and acknowledge the horrible and unnecessary nature of their actions. For the future of humanity, justice and peace.

(Translation Current Concerns)