

# Current Concerns

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## The “Great Reset” – Alternatives

What matters is a peace-promoting, small-scale oriented monetary order

Interview with Professor Dipl.-Ing. Dr Heinrich Wohlmeyer

*Current Concerns: Professor Wohlmeyer, in the Corona crisis, which has now been going on for more than a year, we are once again confronted with the claim that this pandemic only allows one way forward for our future order of -politics, economy and society. Klaus Schwab, founder and director of the World Economic Forum WEF, has tried to define this one path: in his book “COVID-19: The Great Reset”, together with Thierry Malleret. How do you assess this allegedly no-alternative concept?*

*Heinrich Wohlmeyer: Klaus Schwab assumes that the fourth industrial revolution will worldwide leave no traditional social stone standing thanks to technical advances in biology (especially genetics), IT (Big data and digitalisation up to Internet of Things [IoT], 3D printing, etc.), physics (up to nanotechnology), transport (e.g., use of drones in the service sector). We would have a window of opportunity that must be used to build a new so-*



cc. Heinrich Wohlmeyer was raised by farmers after his father died before being deported to a concentration camp, his parental home was destroyed by bombs and his mother became ill. He went to the gymnasium (grammar school) “on his own”, studied law, international business law in the USA and England, and agriculture and food technology at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna. Back in Austria, he volunteered as regional developer and industry manager for the Waldviertel (the northwestern region of the northeast Austrian state of Lower Austria) and became director of the Austrian Agricultural Industry. After “talking himself apart”, he went to university and taught resource economics and environmental management. In all these activities he realised that the hubs of unsustainable development are trade and financial policies that undermine regional economic cycles. “We need regional solutions for the best possible regional prosperity,” he says.

“In his concept, Klaus Schwab favours the expansion of everything that is technically possible. Many of these ideas are based on a mania for feasibility that fundamentally misjudges earthly reality and the human being and is therefore anything but humane. In addition, much of Schwab and Malleret’s work is based on a ‘Western view of prosperity’: If the COVID-19 measures would lead to a “rethinking of priorities”, as Schwab and Malleret claim in their book, then one must counter that the great mass of poor and hungry people have no time or opportunity to weigh up priorities. These fellow human beings must think exclusively of survival.”

cial order. This would require a technical-ly supported *global governance*.

### Criteria for the assessment of the “Great Reset”

I suggest that we use the three criteria of the deceased social ethicist Johannes Schasching to evaluate the assessments and proposals made in the “Great Reset”:

- Is a course of action appropriate?
- Is it humane?
- Is it socially acceptable?

I would like to add the recommendations of the Nobel Prize winner for neurology John C. Eccles and the Swiss behavioural biologist Hans Zeier from their joint book “Gehirn und Geist. Biologische Erkenntnisse über Vorgeschichte, Wesen und Zukunft des Menschen“ (Brain and Mind. Biological insights into the prehistory, nature and future of man). For a successful shaping of society which is adapted to human nature, they call for manageable social units with direct physical contacts and insightful roles, as well as a technology adapted to this.

Finally, the easily memorable five system principles of the biosphere, which I have introduced into the ecological discussion (key principles for the sustainable shaping of demand covering systems that are adapted to nature and people):

- solar orientation of energy supply (adapted local mix),

- material cycles that are as closed as possible,
- cascading use of energy and materials as well as repair, maintenance and reuse,
- biological diversity (perception of all synergisms that present themselves, and thus also resilience and stability),
- decentralisation and intelligent networking as a basic condition for the realisation of the above principles and the consideration of human biological requirements.

All orientations should be included in the attempt to make an unbiased assessment.

### An anonymising global enforced conformity

*Can you explain this in more detail, for example with regard to the criterion of human justice?*

Since we are designed to live and work in manageable groups, an anonymising global enforced conformity, in which the human being is only a number in the global collective, leads not only to a reduction in individual happiness, but also to an increase in mental illness, which again additionally weakens the immune system.

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### "The 'Great Reset' – Alternatives"

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### Schwab's criticism on the national state is no more than a prejudice

*And what about social justice?*

Schwab is convinced, according to his speech at the *Chicago Council of Global Affairs* in June 2019: "The fourth industrial revolution will lead to a fusion of our physical, digital and biological identities as part of the 'Great Reset'." "Bringing together capitalism and socialism to create a productive and inclusive economic and social model." This conviction is pulsing through the whole book "The Great Reset". When on page 107 of his book the "trilemma" of globalisation, democracy and the national state is asserted, in which only two are compatible from the perspective of world welfare, namely globalisation and democracy, this is clearly a technocratic misjudgement. The national states are the cradle of democracies and can interact meaningfully through the international law.

The statement in the book's conclusions: "*The pandemic is a rare but narrow window of opportunity to reimagine and reset our world*" is therefore a statement "from above", and this supports a totalitarian world state – a "supernanny world state" in a social and green security cloak with satisfied unfree.

Thus, the analyses and proposals of Klaus Schwab and Thierry Malleret could be summarised as follows: A renewed soft, globally controlled capitalism "less divided, less polluting, less destructive, more inclusive, more just and fairer" – but with less freedom.

### What is needed is a redesign according to the measure of the human being

*Today we have decided to talk primarily about alternatives to the "Great Reset", both in principle and in concrete terms. Let us start with the fundamental principles.*

Indeed, the "Great Reset" is not a perspective, and we should not dwell on it too long. The redesign according to the measure of the human being and the ecosystem of the earth does not need a "Great Reset", it would rather have to decentralise, intel-

ligently network and, above all, give the citizens a voice through direct democracy, which would also give space to the delightful cultural diversity.

### Information technology and microelectronics – Seven-league boots to decentralisation

*What tasks do we face?*

I see three main tasks: our energy system, our way of doing trade and our financial system.

The energy system is currently fossil-based, we carry our money to the oil states, they use our money to buy up businesses in our country, and we lose purchasing power. There is the possibility of building regional energy supply systems. But then you also have to regionalise the demand response systems in general. That is an essential point! I have always told my students: We have developed the seven-league boots of decentralisation: information technology, microelectronics, telecommunications – and instead of for intelligent decentralisation we use them for inappropriate centralisation. Centralisation is always linked to undemocratic measures, because the local citizen is referred to the guidelines from the head office.

In the trade sector, it is always "prayed" of the economists what *David Ricardo* said in his time: Production should go to the relatively best and cheapest. But now that we have very different social and ecological standards in world trade – see USA, Europe, China, India and other states – production goes to the absolutely cheapest, not to the relatively cheapest, and the system no longer functions.

### We have a monetary dictatorship

On the financial sector: *Friedrich August von Hayek* talked about the natural interest rate that generates, because when the economy is starting up, the demand for credit increases. This causes the interest rate to rise. This again acts as a brake, and the credits become cheaper, and that again provides an incentive for the economy to start up. But all that no longer exists. We don't have competition in the monetary system at the moment, but a monetary dictatorship. When I look at Europe, it is a simple disaster. What we are now experiencing in the COVID-19 management is a quite massive public debt. And the credits are again given by the money powers of the world, who are getting even richer. For it must always be repeated: every debt is matched by assets. We have a debt money system. And therefore, we need an orderly world debt cut. These super assets are born out of nothing. We know that money is created out of nothing. Here I would like to go back to my colleague *Richard Werner*, a financial scientist at *De Mont-*

*fort University* in Leicester, who spent ten years in Japan and wrote the best book on the Japanese yen, "Princes of the Yen". He says: "We have to return to regional money creation so that the expansion of the money supply benefits the community again and we can use it to finance general prosperity and infrastructure!" (cf. *Current Concerns* No. 8 of 13 April 2021)

### We must re-regionalise currencies

This is, I believe, a very clear message that we cannot ignore. We need to re-regionalise the currencies and put them in the hands of the communities so that we can conduct monetary policy in a prosperity-enhancing way. There is an interesting smaller US bank, the *Bank of North Dakota*. There they have subliminally created a state bank, but they have never become active enough for the *Federal Reserve System* to take action against them. Now they write quite openly that they can finance the state cheaper, support small local banks and issue cheap loans because they have no interest rate constraint.

### We are currently going through a global struggle for a new monetary order

*Why is this not implemented everywhere?*

We are currently going through a global struggle for a new monetary order. At the negotiations for the *Bretton Woods agreement* the USA had forced the Dollar as lead currency system, still indirectly gold-backed at first, upon the world. This gold-backing was abolished in 1971. Basically, just by announcing this gold-backing was no longer valid the entire world was defrauded. At present, the only backing for the dollar is provided by the US military. War is waged against anybody who threatens to leave the dollar system so that it keeps functioning for the time being. I say, we are experiencing the agonal state of the late world hegemon who is clinging to his importance of bygone days.

But we cannot simply turn the clock back to the gold standard. The gold standard did work in the previous century because the gold production happened to correspond to the growth of the currency. But if I were to re-introduce gold-backing I would first need to distribute the world gold reserves justly to make sure everybody was able to stabilize their respective currencies. Otherwise, things would turn out so that the owners of the old gold mines or the old reserves would be filthy rich and all others pay for it. The same would happen as when the English government had forced the gold standard on their American colonies, who had just introduced the *Colonial Scrips*<sup>1</sup> – a successful regional currency – which resulted in the collapse of the economy. One has to say it loud and clear: There ain't enough

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# Avoiding War in Ukraine

Memorandum from Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity (VIPS)\* to the President of the USA

Dear President *Biden*,

We last communicated with you on 20 December 2020, when you were President-elect.

At that time, we alerted you to the dangers inherent in formulating a policy toward Russia built on a foundation of Russia-bashing. While we continue to support the analysis contained in that memorandum, this new memo serves a far more pressing purpose. We wish to draw your attention to the dangerous situation that exists in Ukraine today, where there is growing risk of war unless you take steps to forestall such a conflict.

At this juncture, we call to mind two basic realities that need particular emphasis amid growing tension between Ukraine and Russia.

First, since Ukraine is not a member of NATO, Article 5 of the NATO Treaty of course would not apply in the case of an armed conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

Second, Ukraine's current military flexing, if allowed to transition into actual military action, could lead to hostilities with Russia.

We think it crucial that your administration immediately seek to remove from the table, so to speak, any "solution" to the current impasse that has a military component. In short, there is, and can never be, a military solution to this problem.

Your interim national security strategy guidance indicated that your administration would "make smart and disciplined choices regarding our national defense and the responsible use of our military, while elevating diplomacy as our tool of first resort." Right now is the perfect time to put these words into action for all to see.

We strongly believe:

1. It must be made clear to Ukrainian President *Zelensky* that there will be no military assistance from either the US or NATO if he does not restrain Ukrainian hawks itching to give Russia a bloody

nose — hawks who may well expect the West to come to Ukraine's aid in any conflict with Russia. (There must be no repeat of the fiasco of August 2008, when the Republic of Georgia initiated offensive military operations against South Ossetia in the mistaken belief that the US would come to its assistance if Russia responded militarily.)

2. We recommend that you quickly get back in touch with *Zelensky* and insist that Kiev halt its current military buildup in eastern Ukraine. Russian forces have been lining up at the border ready to react if *Zelensky's* loose talk of war becomes more than bravado. Washington should also put on hold all military training activity involving US and NATO troops in the region. This would lessen the chance that Ukraine would misinterpret these training missions as a de facto sign of support for Ukrainian military operations to regain control of either the Donbas or Crimea.

3. It is equally imperative that the U.S. engage in high-level diplomatic talks with Russia to reduce tensions in the region and de-escalate the current rush toward military conflict. Untangling the complex web of issues that currently burden U.S.-Russia relations is a formidable task that will not be accomplished overnight. This would be an opportune time to work toward a joint goal of preventing armed hostilities in Ukraine and wider war.

There is opportunity as well as risk in the current friction over Ukraine. This crisis offers your administration the opportunity to elevate the moral authority of the United States in the eyes of the international community. Leading with diplomacy will greatly enhance the stature of America in the world.

For the Steering Group, *Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity*

*William Binney*, former Technical Director, World Geopolitical & Military Analysis, NSA; co-founder, SIGINT Automation Research Center (ret.)

*Marshall Carter-Tripp*, Foreign Service Officer & former Division Director in the State Department Bureau of Intelligence and Research (ret.)

*Bogdan Dzakovic*, former Team Leader of Federal Air Marshals and Red Team, FAA Security (ret.) (associate VIPS)

*Graham E. Fuller*, Vice-Chair, National Intelligence Council (ret.)

*Robert M. Furukawa*, Captain, Civil Engineer Corps, USNR (ret.)

*Philip Giraldi*, CIA, Operations Officer (ret.)

*Mike Gravel*, former Adjutant, top secret control officer, Communications Intelligence Service; special agent of the Counter Intelligence Corps and former United States Senator

*John Kiriakou*, former CIA Counterterrorism Officer and former Senior Investigator, Senate Foreign Relations Committee

*Karen Kwiatkowski*, former Lt. Col., US Air Force (ret.), at Office of Secretary of Defense watching the manufacture of lies on Iraq, 2001-2003

*Edward Loomis*, NSA Cryptologic Computer Scientist (ret.)

*Ray McGovern*, former US Army infantry/intelligence officer & CIA presidential briefer (ret.)

*Elizabeth Murray*, former Deputy National Intelligence Officer for the Near East & CIA political analyst (ret.)

*Pedro Israel Orta*, CIA Operations Officer & Analyst; Inspector with IG for the Intelligence Community (ret.)

*Todd E. Pierce*, MAJ, US Army Judge Advocate (ret.)

*Scott Ritter*, former MAJ., USMC, former UN Weapon Inspector, Iraq

*Coleen Rowley*, FBI Special Agent and former Minneapolis Division Legal Counsel (ret.)

*Kirk Wiebe*, former Senior Analyst, SIGINT Automation Research Center, NSA

*Sarah G. Wilton*, CDR, USNR, (ret.); Defense Intelligence Agency (ret.)

*Robert Wing*, U.S. Department of State, Foreign Service Officer (former) (associate VIPS)

*Ann Wright*, U.S. Army Reserve Colonel (ret) and former U.S. Diplomat who resigned in 2003 in opposition to the Iraq War

Source: Copyright © Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, with friendly permission of Antiwar.com from 6 April 2021

<sup>3</sup> *Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity* (VIPS) is made up of former intelligence officers, diplomats, military officers and congressional staffers. The organization, founded in 2002, was among the first critics of Washington's justifications for launching a war against Iraq. VIPS advocates a US foreign and national security policy based on genuine national interests rather than contrived threats promoted for largely political reasons.

## Joe Biden recruiting allies

by Manlio Dinucci, Italy



Manlio Dinucci  
(Picture ma)

Joe Biden had announced it in his electoral program: “While President Trump has abandoned allies and partners, and abdicated American leadership, as president I will immediately take steps to renew the al-

liances of the United States, and ensure that America, one more time, lead the world”. He kept his promise. The aircraft carrier *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and its battle group, made up of 5 missile launchers, “attacked Islamic State positions in Syria and Iraq from the Eastern Mediterranean” since the Islamic State “claimed responsibility for an attack on Palma in Mozambique”. The US Navy officially announced this on 31 March, without explaining how ISIS, defeated in Syria and elsewhere especially following the Russian intervention, now reappears threateningly with suspicious punctuality.

After launching the attack from the Eastern Mediterranean – area of the *United States European Command* naval forces with their headquarters in Naples Capodichino – the aircraft carrier *Eisenhower* crossed the newly reopened Suez Canal on 2 April, entering the *US Central Command* area that includes the Persian Gulf. Here it joined the French aircraft carrier

*Charles de Gaulle* that at Washington’s request assumed the command of the *US Task Force 50* on 31 March, not for deployment against ISIS but in reality, against Iran.

The fact that Washington asked Paris to lead a US naval force with its flagship falls within the policy of the Biden Presidency, which still maintains control of the command chain, as *Task Force 50* depends on the *US Central Command*.

This is confirmed by the warfighter exercise which, planned by the US Army, has been carried out from 6 April to 15 April 2021 by US, French, and British divisions at Fort Hood and Fort Bliss in Texas, at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, and at Grafenwoehr in Germany. In this exercise, French and British brigades operated within a US division, while US brigades operated within French and British divisions, but always according to the US plan. The warfighter exercise integrates the large ongoing exercise *Defender-Europe 21*, which the US Army in Europe and Africa will carry out until June together with European and African allies and partners, to demonstrate “the ability of the United States to be strategic partners in the Balkans and in the Black Sea, in the Caucasus, in Ukraine and Africa”.

The US Army V Corps, just reactivated at Fort Knox (Kentucky) participates in *Defender-Europe 21*, has established its command headquarters in Poznan (Poland), from where it commands operations

against Russia. On 31 March, at the request of the United States, Polish general *Adam Joks* was appointed US Army V Corps Deputy Commander. “It is the first time – reports the US Embassy in Warsaw – that a Polish general has entered the Military Command structure of the United States”. In other words, General *Adam Joks* continues to be part of the Polish army but, as Deputy Commander of the US V Corps, is now directly dependent on the command chain headed by the President of the United States.

The new security forces assistance brigades, special US Army units, that “organise, train, equip and advise foreign security forces” fall within the same policy. They are engaged “in support of a legitimate government authority” in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe, currently in the *Defender-Europe* framework. They are an effective tool for launching de facto military operations under US command with the “assistance” cover. This explains why, after a relative respite, the Ukrainian chief of staff, *Ruslan Khomchak*, declared on 1 April that the Kyiv army “is preparing for the offensive in Eastern Ukraine”, that is, against Donbas Russian population, also using “territorial defence forces” (such as the neo-Nazi Regiment *Azov*), and in this operation “the participation of NATO allies is envisaged”.

Source: *Il manifesto* of 6 April 2021, (some time specifications were adjusted, eds.)

## Chief of the Southern Command of the US Forces visits Uruguay and Argentina

by Stella Calloni, Argentina

gl. When Alberto Fernández took over as president of Argentina in December 2019, the country was once again on the brink of national bankruptcy. 40% of the population was living below the poverty threshold and inflation was over 50%. Two months after he took office, the country experienced the first wave of the *Corona* pandemic, and is now suffering severely from the second wave.

The previous government of *Mauricio Macri* had ruined the country in only four years of office according to the old recipes of neoliberalism, undoing the painstaking reconstruction of the past 15 years: mass layoffs in state-owned enterprises, exorbitant price increases for electricity, water and public transport, massive increases in food prices. *Macri* had agreed to repay the remaining old debts to hedge funds that were not willing to reschedule, lifted all capital controls and received the

largest loan ever granted by the *IMF*, totalling 57 billion dollars. Today, debt rescheduling negotiations with the *IMF* are still ongoing and are keeping the government very busy, in addition to dealing with the *COVID-19* pandemic.

The head of the US Armed Forces Southern Command, Admiral *Craig Faller*, arrived in Argentina on 7 April, coming from Uruguay. The next day, he met with Defence Minister *Agustin Rossi* and his international affairs team for a “humanitarian tour to donate three field hospitals on behalf of the Pentagon to assist Argentina in joint efforts to combat the *COVID-19* pandemic,” according to the US Embassy.

According to an analysis by *Infobae*, a digital portal that receives direct information from the US, “*Faller*’s visit to Argentina on this occasion has a triple diplomatic purpose: to make clear that the

democratic US administration will not distance itself from the Argentine government based on its decision to turn its back on the *Lima Group*<sup>1</sup>; to solidify the White

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gl. Former Argentine President *Mauricio Macri* concluded a so-called “security agreement” with the *US Southern Command*. This was based on a 1995 decree by then President *Carlos Menem* to install a US military base in *Tolhuin*, second city of *Tierra del Fuego*, the south tip of Argentina, to monitor nuclear explosions. The installation of a logistic base in *Usuhaia* was also announced.

Already in 2017, US diplomats, mentioning the investments of the multinationals *Chevron* and *ExxonMobil Corp.* in the *Vaca Muerta* oilfields, had been monitoring the place where this “base” would be located.

# When they are at their wit's end, they make war

by Professor Dr Eberhard Hamer, *Mittelstandsinstitut Niedersachsen e. V.*



Eberhard Hamer  
(Picture ma)

My first crash-book in 2001<sup>1</sup> saw only three crash causes: the speculation bubble, the inflation bubble and a social crash. Therefore, a new edition<sup>2</sup> became necessary in 2017 because a previously insignificant crash reason has become increasingly likely, and that is war.

Throughout history, in particular monarchs, dictators and big banks have tried war as a foreign policy solution when they were under pressure domestically, e. g. *Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, Churchill*. After all, the declaration of a war makes it possible to overrun arisen domestic political difficulties through emergency war laws, e.g. forcing social unrest into war solidarity, solving economic crises through war production, papering over national debt problems through war bonds and war debt and, above all, thus keeping a politically failed government in office. Even the Nobel Peace Prize laureate *Obama* waged wars in order to maintain sales for the American arms industry and financing opportunities for the financial industry, and to maintain a world monopoly for the commodity cartels (oil).

Economic reasons are consistently in the foreground: see the US oil war in Iraq and Syria, but also the economic war against Iran, Venezuela, Libya.

Ultimately, even the war alliance NATO is, according to its own understanding, an instrument of domination, “to keep the Americans in, the Russians out and the Germans down!”, and NATO can actually only justify its existence – repudiated by *Macron* and many others – as an aggression pact against the East, which entails constantly recurring claims of Russian aggression.

American policy itself has its focus on aggression against China because as a growing economic power China is threatening to overtake the USA and, according to the US military, here “a military confrontation as early as possible is necessary”.

So dangers of war exist all around us, not only theoretically, but also practically and even concretely.

Wars have been waged by the USA all the time, but so far they were mostly economic or regionally limited wars. In the final analysis, the US is also waging economic war against Germany, for example in the case of Nord Stream 2, or with the total espionage of its secret service over our entire economy and our digital networks.

But it could come to a world war again if the world money bubble threatens to burst.

Until 1971 (gold standard), the stability and soundness of our currency was the responsibility of central banks. Since then, politics has expanded its ability to appoint central bank boards so that it dominates them – mostly through employees of the world financial syndicate, like the Ameri-

cans with *Yellen*, the Italians with *Draghi* or the EU with *Lagarde*<sup>3</sup>. Under political pressure, the central banks have expanded the money supply for all political purposes, flooded it and even multiplied it in the Corona crisis, so that 6 trillion of debts have been created that can never be repaid, but could only be consolidated again as “perpetual debt” (*Soros*) through galloping inflation and currency crashes.

With such over-indebtedness, many countries on earth can only survive as long as the central banks are able to maintain zero interest rates. However, as soon as, in realisation of the over-indebtedness and the coming devaluation of money, a flight into tangible assets begins in economy and population, and as a result the velocity of money in circulation increases again, this will inevitably lead to galloping inflation, to interest rate hikes and insolvencies of important countries such as Japan, the USA, Greece, Italy, Spain, France, etc. This will inevitably lead to the financial collapse of banks, of the currency, of states, i.e., to a worldwide crash, with the exception of currencies not entrenched in the Western financial system, such as the rouble or the yuan.

Before submitting to a financial collapse, large countries will try to find a foreign policy outlet to neutralise the difficulties and distract the population: namely a war. This keeps a failed government in office for at least a while longer.

At present, a nonsensical spiral is building up:

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## “Chief of the Southern Command ...”

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House’s position on these countries; and to place this visit in a clear geopolitical context.”

Behind the visit would also be the pursuit of the so-called “vaccine diplomacy” that Russia and China have with Argentina. Without *Sinopharm* and *Sputnik V* vaccines, President *Alberto Fernández* would face social chaos in the face of the second wave of the Corona virus, and “this weakened health care situation, which the Pentagon and State Department characterise as a sign of dependence on *Vladimir Putin* and *Xi Jinping*, will override Faller’s talks”, says analyst *Edgardo Aguilera*.

During his visit to Uruguay, Faller also handed over three field hospitals worth \$4.8 million as a donation, among other medical supplies, which triggered a strong protest from trade union sectors and left – political parties who condemned the

numerous interference actions of the US Southern Command in their country.

Regarding the donation of three field hospitals to his own country, *Aguilera* adds, “Argentina already has the use of mobile hospitals of larger dimensions: one from the Argentine Air Force and two ceded by the People’s Republic of China to the Argentine army; 13 containers of its own trucks worth almost \$5 million arrived in the country earlier this year.”

Agreeing with other analysts, he explains that Faller’s trip to the Tierra del Fuego capital of Ushuaia is part of a geopolitical gambit, recalling that on 24 March last year, “during a conference organised by the *William J. Perry Centre for Hemispheric Defense Studies*, the admiral spoke about Chinese fishing fleets and illegal fishing activities and said that no country could face these threats alone.” You could say it is not fisheries or squid, it is China.

*Aguilera* pointed out that “last February, in the strategic interest of the US, the first step was taken in Operation *Southern Cross* with the deployment of the advanced coast guard vessel *Stone*. The Coast Guard’s first patrol in South America is designed to build regional maritime security partnerships and combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the South Atlantic.”

Currently, the South Atlantic is increasingly under the ambitious gaze of the United States, the United Kingdom, as well as the greed of international corporations seeking to acquire vast areas of resources in the geostrategic ally significant South Atlantic. •

<sup>1</sup> The *Lima Group* is a coalition of a number of Latin American countries that support the overthrow of the government of Venezuela.

Source: <https://www.msn.com/es-mx/noticias/mundo/ilega-jefe-del-comando-sur-a-argentina/BB1fpHJb> of 7 April 2021

(Translation *Current-Concerns*)

# The Federal Council's "China Strategy"

## Not a glorious chapter for neutral Switzerland

by Dr. iur. Marianne Wüthrich

Great powers are not in the habit of stepping down quietly when other states scratch at the world domination they have accumulated over decades or centuries. This is demonstrated these days by the new American administration, which was also hailed on our continent by many media and other voices as a liberator from the "uncouth behaviour" of the previous government and its "decisions of a madman". But Donald Trump's bluster pales beside what Joe Biden and his team have already done to the two great powers in the East. The "welcoming speech" with which the US government received its invited Chinese guests lacked all decency and did not exactly present a positive image of "Western values" – especially in comparison to the high culture of receiving guests in Asia.

What must be particularly disturbing for us Europeans, however, is the realisation that the majority of the politicians and media here do not distance themselves from the rude and, for world peace, frightening demonstrations of power by "gentle" Joe Biden and his advisors. Instead, they incessantly attack the Russian and Chinese governments who dare to stand up to them unequivocally: We will not let you divert us from our own path of how we want to move in our country and in the world – you first have to put your own house in order!

It is one thing that Washington is doing everything to harness the NATO "partners" and the EU to its cart in the fight

against its two most important rivals. It is also nothing new that Switzerland is being pressured by the USA and the EU to let itself be harnessed to their cart. But we citizens cannot accept the Federal Council buckling under and ignoring the principle of neutrality with its new "China strategy". Equally disconcerting is the position of the Swiss mainstream media, which not only support this tendency that contravenes neutrality, but also incite the Federal Council to completely adopt the sanctions of Washington and Brussels.

### Constructive cooperation between Switzerland and China for 70 years

On 19 March 2021, the Federal Council published its "China Strategy".<sup>1</sup> With this, the Federal Council is striving for better coordination between the many federal offices, the cantons, universities, companies and other organisations that have to do with China (Strategy, p. 3). Or is rather striving for better control over the doings of the individual agencies? After an overview and a geopolitical analysis, Chapter 3, "Switzerland and China", begins by acknowledging the relationship between the two countries, which has been built up over 70 years and is appreciated by both sides: "Switzerland was one of the first Western countries to recognise the People's Republic of China in 1950. Since the beginning of the 1980s, bilateral relations with China have strengthened in all areas and reached a remarkable intensity. They cover different areas such as poli-

### Neutrality "case-by-case"?

ev. There is agreement on the assessment of Guantánamo, but sanctions against responsible individuals or states? Nothing doing.

Dick Marty, former member of the Council of States and member of the Council of Europe, explained: There were abductions by the US secret services, supported by European services, and torture – partly delegated to services of other states. Sanctions? Neither from the EU nor from Switzerland. Does one "defend" human rights today, by choice, at the command of the stronger one to whom one submits?

How about integral neutrality as a principle? Without double standards.

cy, human rights, economy, labour market and employment, science and technology, education, environment, migration and culture. Since 2010, China has been Switzerland's most important trading partner in Asia. In 2005, the Federal Council identified China as one of today's eight global priority countries for Switzerland's foreign policy." (Strategy, p. 15)

According to the daily press, four Federal Councillors are planning trips to China this year – if this is possible due to the pandemic: President Guy Parmelin with a business and science delegation, Ignazio Cassis for the annual dialogue with the Chinese Foreign Minister, Ueli Maurer. continued on page 7

### "When they are at their wit's end ..."

continued from page 5

1. Financially, the US has its back against the wall with a doubling of its debt in just one year. The financial industry will need some kind of solution.

And the military-industrial complex, which dominates 70% of the American industry, urgently needs sales and justification.

The current US president is surrounded by hardliners from financial industry (BlackRock) and military, who together spread hatred against Russia and even derogatorily call Putin a murderer.

2. A grandiose military build-up in Ukraine has already been completed. The Ukrainian president and comedian Zelensky has lost consent and therefore promised combat against the Donbass "in May". US President Biden promised his colleague Zelensky "unconditional backing" at the end of March.

3. The Poles have also been encouraged to interfere with the further construction

of the Russian Nord Stream 2 pipeline by submarine and ship traffic.

4. On 3 April 2021, Georgia assured NATO of its solidarity in case of a war against Russia.

5. The general focus on the Corona pandemic could be a diversionary manoeuvre hiding a much more dangerous tension, namely the relegation battle of the disintegrating world power USA against a meanwhile more capable competitor (China) with which a military confrontation is "inevitable" according to the American military and government, while the US financial industry believes that the Russia problem must be solved first at all events.

The author has experienced wartime and knows how terrible war and its consequences are, so he does not understand the indifference of the population to the growing danger of war.

When governments make ready rhetorically, economically and militarily, the population should push for disarmament

and peace in all areas. It is no longer a question of climate protection, gender or feminism, but of war and peace, of death or life for millions of people, which could break loose through a single moment of madness in a heated-up situation.

For the economy, this also means thinking about the consequences if Ukraine really were to invade the Donbass in May, possibly triggering a war that would involve all of Europe and us as well. After all, the large-scale NATO manoeuvre *Defender Europe 21* has earmarked Germany as a combat zone and even included nuclear weapons.

We are no longer standing apart from the danger, but in the middle of it! Those who do not warn now will themselves be guilty! •

<sup>1</sup> cf. Hamer, Eberhard. *Was passiert, wenn der Crash kommt?* (What will happen if the crash comes?) Stuttgart 2000

<sup>2</sup> cf. Hamer, Eberhard. *Der grosse Crash-Ratgeber.* (The great crash-guide) Rottenburg a. N. 2017

<sup>3</sup> Although she was not technically qualified and had been previously finally convicted for corruption.

### "The Federal Council's 'China Strategy'"

continued from page 6

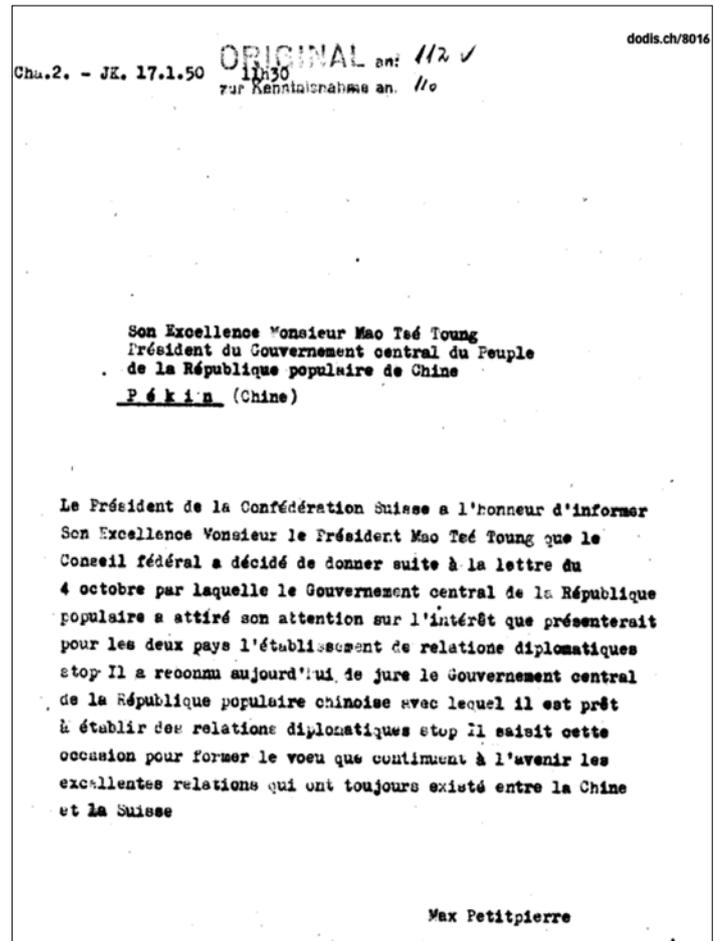
rer travels to Beijing every two years as head of the Finance Department, and Federal Councillor *Simonetta Sommaruga* wants to take part in the summit on the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Kunming in autumn (see "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" of 12 April 2021). So, there is lively contact at the political, economic and cultural levels.

Against the background of the good relations between the two states, it is all the more serious that the Federal Council's China strategy also contains several statements that harm these relations without necessity. In doing so, the Federal Council deliberately departs from the path of neutrality.

#### Swiss interference in China's internal affairs

In its "China Strategy", the Federal Council on the one hand acknowledges China's great achievement in the fight against poverty: "Hundreds of millions of people have been able to lift themselves out of poverty within a few decades. China is thus making a significant contribution to global poverty reduction". (Strategy, p. 8) On the other hand, it clearly criticises the Chinese state system and various violations of human and minority rights. According to the strategy report China is a de facto one-party state led by the CCP, without separation of powers and with a state capitalist economic model. Digitalisation is also used to discipline the population (Strategy, p. 8). And: "The human rights situation

continued on page 8



*mw.* Telegram from the then President of Swiss Confederation *Max Petitpierre* to Chinese President *Mao Zedong* dated 17 January 1950 (*dodis.ch/8016*). In response to the Chinese government's letter of 4 October 1950, Switzerland declares its willingness to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China. The President of the Swiss Confederation "takes this opportunity to express the wish that the excellent relations that have always existed between China and Switzerland may continue in the future."

### New EU sanctions regime – not for neutral Switzerland!

*mw.* On 7 December 2020, the Council of the European Union (heads of states and governments of the 27 EU member states) adopted a sanctions regime to "target individuals, entities and bodies – including state and non-state actors – responsible for, involved in or associated with serious human rights violations and abuses worldwide, no matter where they occurred". These sanctions include, among others, a travel ban and the freezing of funds. "It will be for the Council, acting upon a proposal from a member state or from the *High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy*, to establish, review and amend the sanctions list."

The acts to be punished by EU-wide sanctions include, in addition to relevant violations of mandatory international law, "arbitrary arrests or detentions" and "other human rights violations or abuses [...] where those violations or abuses are widespread, systematic or are otherwise of serious concern". [emphasis *mw*]<sup>1</sup>

How do the EU heads of state come to set themselves up as the supreme moral authority for the entire world? With this new regulation, the EU heads of state are opening the door to unilateral political decisions. For example, in the case of police operations against demonstrators – depending on the government that orders them. An attempt to push forward the bumpy road to a tighter political union? The EU sanctions list of 22 March 2021 looks rather mixed: It includes eleven individuals and four organisations from China, North Korea, Libya, Russia, South Sudan and Eritrea, plus four more Russians who were already sanctioned at the beginning of March (Council of the EU. *Press release* of 22 March 2021). In addition, there are the sanctions already imposed in 2020 against 88 individuals and 7 organisations in Belarus – "responsible for the ongoing violent repression and intimidation of peaceful demonstrators, opposition members and journalists", as well as against "prominent

businessmen and companies benefiting from and/or supporting the regime of *Aleksandr Lukashenko*."<sup>2</sup> Is it a "serious human rights violation" for a businessman to support his country's elected government? And since when has a person's "prominence" been a relevant criterion under criminal law?

The whole thing really has nothing to do with Switzerland, does it? As far as the sanctions against people and organisations in Belarus are concerned, unfortunately it does. It is to be hoped that the Federal Council will not be carried away into sanctioning more people according to the EU list. Do we really need to remind him that Switzerland, as a neutral state, does not have to comply with sanctions imposed by the USA or the EU?

<sup>1</sup> Council of the EU. "EU adopts a global human rights sanctions regime". *Press release* 7 December 2020

<sup>2</sup> Council of the EU. "Belarus: EU imposes third round of sanctions over ongoing repression". *Press release* 17 December 2020

### "The Federal Council's 'China Strategy'"

continued from page 7

in China has deteriorated". This concerns in particular the rights of ethnic minorities (Uyghurs, Tibetans), but also greater restrictions on freedom of expression and the media and on democratic institutions in Hong Kong according to the Chinese Security Law of July 2020 (Strategy, p. 8). The Chinese Embassy in Bern rejected this criticism in its statement of 22 March, saying that Switzerland was sending the wrong signals to the outside world with its accusations and attacks on China's political system, minority policy and human rights situation. This has a negative impact on the healthy development of relations between China and Switzerland.<sup>2</sup>

The state system and the human rights policy of China and Switzerland are two different pairs of shoes, as the Chinese embassy also notes. However, this also applies to numerous other states. The Swiss principle of neutrality means that Switzerland has diplomatic relations with all states in the world and maintains them in such a way that it can make its voice heard as a universally respected and non-aligned state. By snubbing another state, we make cooperation more difficult and reduce the chances of Switzerland's good offices. It is shameful that the Chinese embassy has to draw our attention to this.

### Independent

#### Swiss Foreign policy looks different

In its "China strategy", the Federal Council repeatedly affirms that it wants to pursue an independent foreign policy, also with China, and it also declares that this is indispensable for the trustworthiness of neutral Switzerland – but it does not stick to it.

– The proven principle: "The Swiss foreign policy will continue to be independent and universally oriented. Switzerland is neutral, does not belong to any bloc and is committed to dialogue with all states." (Strategy, p. 20)

– The kink: Switzerland must position itself "in the changing power structure" (Strategy, p. 13). And the Federal Council "positions" Switzerland, namely as an appendage of the EU: "European states and the EU itself often hold similar positions to Switzerland and remain its most important partners. Our values are often congruent. *Regulated relations with the EU are becoming even more important in the current geopolitical situation, and closer coordination is also urgently needed on some global political issues.*" (Strategy, p. 20; emphasis mw)

So the Federal Council is aiming for a common foreign policy with the EU?! In the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" it is replenished in this direction: the Federal Council's

China strategy is "cautious" and contains "mainly recommendations", says editor *Georg Häsler Sansano*, but at least "cooperation with like-minded countries in the area of internal security" is to be strengthened. Häsler immediately interprets this according to his reading: "– in other words: Switzerland is part of the West in terms of security policy. In an interconnected world, stubborn solo actions create dangerous leaks."<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately, it must be said, that Switzerland is in fact already far too integrated into the political-military blocs of the West, although our values are not at all "congruent": The principle of neutrality is diametrically opposed to Switzerland's integration into the security policy of the EU/NATO. It is intolerable that Swiss officers like Lieutenant Colonel Häsler Sansano should disregard the principle of neutrality.

– The ideological background: China is contributing a lot to the development of numerous countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa with the infrastructure projects of its Belt-and-Road-Initiative, the Federal Council admits.

But: China does not fit into the Western regulatory system of development finance and the management of the OECD, IMF and World Bank. Its activities are not "transparent" and some recipient countries have "become heavily financially dependent on China" (Strategy, p. 11).

It is of course annoying for the Wall Street and the City of London that many poorer states prefer to have their roads, railways and power lines financed by China rather than bow under the yoke of the IMF/World Bank debt management.

#### Back to the policy of neutrality – Resuming the human rights dialogue with China from equal to equal!

Since 1991, China and Switzerland have held a regular human rights dialogue, according to the "China Strategy": "The confidential human rights dialogue provides a platform for addressing the human rights situation openly and critically. This includes in particular freedom of expression and minority rights, including in the Tibetan areas of China and in Xinjiang." (Strategy, p.19) At this, "concrete cooperation opportunities have also been explored", for example the exchange of experts in the penitentiary system since 2003.

Since 2018, however, China has now cancelled further planned talks, with reference to Switzerland's interference in internal affairs (Strategy, p.19). In an interview, the Chinese ambassador in Bern, Wang Shihting, first notes the good successes of the dialogue: "Since 1991, China and Switzerland have held several rounds that have improved mutual understanding." In the last two years, however, Switzerland had participated in anti-China statements

in the Human Rights Council and in the UN on Xinjiang and Hong Kong, thus "severely damaging the atmosphere of the bilateral human rights dialogue". Nevertheless, China remained open to the human rights dialogue with Switzerland.<sup>4</sup>

Neutrality is the most important principle of Swiss foreign policy. According to annual surveys conducted by the ETH Zurich, 90 to 95 per cent of the Swiss population unswervingly adhere to the principle of neutrality. This includes not only non-participation in wars and military alliances, but also non-interference in the internal affairs of other states – and the renunciation of a seat on the UN Security Council. Only on this ground can Switzerland bring its good offices and cooperation with other nations into bloom.

- <sup>1</sup> Swiss Confederation. China Strategie 2021–2024 (China Strategy 2021-2024) of 19 March 2021 (cited: Strategy). [https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/de/documents/publications/SchweizerischeAusussenpolitik/Strategie\\_China\\_210319\\_DE.pdf](https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/eda/de/documents/publications/SchweizerischeAusussenpolitik/Strategie_China_210319_DE.pdf)
- <sup>2</sup> Statement by the spokesperson of the Chinese Embassy in Switzerland on the Federal Council's "China Strategy" of 22 March 2021; <http://www.china-embassy.ch>
- <sup>3</sup> Häsler Sansano, Georg. "Ist die China-Strategie des Bundesrates bereits Makulatur?" (Is the Federal Council's China Strategy already wastepaper?) In: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 22 March 2021.
- <sup>4</sup> Birrer, Raphaela; Häfliger, Markus. Interview with China's ambassador. "This is defamation, it contradicts the image of Switzerland". In: *Tages-Anzeiger* of 22 March 2021

## Current Concerns

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# “Without a strong ‘Mittelstand’ there is no democracy and no market economy”

Eberhard Hamer and Olaf Jörgens answer the question: Who is Mittelstand?

by Ewald Wetekamp



Current Concerns readers are well acquainted with Professor Eberhard Hamer through his analyses of national and global economic and financial policy spac-

es. As the founder of the *Mittelstandsinstitut Niedersachsen* in Hanover in 1975, he sees his task as highlighting the importance of the “Mittelstand” for the functioning of a truly free market economy and a truly existing competition in the market. He is convinced that without a strong “Mittelstand” there can be neither democratic conditions nor free market competition.

## “Mittelstand” as a motor of social developments

Readers who pick up the new book, “Wer ist Mittelstand?”<sup>1</sup>, written together with Olaf Jörgens – who, incidentally, was also a co-author of Eberhard Hamer’s earlier books – should know in advance that they can use this book as a reference work, but also as a reader. In this way, the reader is guided through history with a view to the entrepreneurial personality. The entrepreneurial personality is always characterised as innovative, proactive, responsible, full of ideas and, in relation to society, always as supporting society in a positive sense. From antiquity to the Middle Ages, from modern times to the Weimar Republic and the founding of the Federal Republic of Germany, the book shows the supporting function of the emerging “Mittelstand” in Europe and Germany. From *Charlemagne* to the development of the market towns, the free imperial cities, the guilds and guildettes, the “freedom of a Christian man”, the birth of compulsory education and pedagogy, from *Cromwell* to the ideals of freedom of the French Revolution, from the spread of the same to Germany with its Revolution of 48, from the Weimar Republic to National Socialism to the writing of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany and the existence of two German states – Hamer sees in Germany’s development into a democracy with a clear basic decision in favour of personal freedom, self-responsibility and individual decision-making competence not only the basis of a free society according to law and order, but equally he sees in it the fundamental conditions of a free market economy with freely operating personal enterprises that can and must assert their place in a truly free competition in the market.

## “Mittelstand”, democracy and personal market economy are interdependent

The following quote very clearly illustrates how Hamer understands the bourgeois middle class and the challenges and dangers it faces:

“In the meantime, the bourgeois middle class of small and medium-sized merchants or factory owners, of farmers and various service providers (old, self-employed middle class), of technical intelligentsia, bearers of responsibility in state and private administrations as well as in culture, education, economy and science (new ‘Mittelstand’ of employed educated citizens) is of outstanding, supporting importance as the strongest functional group for the development and stability of society as a whole. Therefore, it is also considered indispensable as a guarantor for the basic decisions of personal freedom, self-responsibility and individual decision-making competence underlying the decentralised systems of order – democracy and market economy. *Without a strong ‘Mittelstand’, there is no democracy and no market economy.*” (p.21, emphasis ew)

With the last sentence, this book has addressed today’s struggle for democracy and a free market economy. This argument runs through the entire work. And it soon becomes clear that democracy and the market economy, civil society with its individual basic freedoms, are not a fixed and immovable system of order whose existence would per se be guaranteed for eternity. It becomes clear that this is precisely what must be fought for.

## The “Mittelstand” from a sociological perspective

Before the authors come to a more detailed presentation of the socio-political and economic significance of the middle class, Olaf Jörgens deals in the second chapter with the question of a generally accepted definition of the so-called “Mittelstand”. In doing so, he draws on sociological analyses since the 19th century. He presents the analyses of *Karl Marx*, *Max Weber* and *Theodor Geiger*. After the Second World War, he sees in *Helmut Schelsky*, *Ralf Dahrendorf*, *Karl Martin Bolte* and *Rainer Geißler* those representatives of the sociological stratification model whom he cites and presents as references. Similar to the first chapter, in which Hamer roams through history, from antiquity to the formulation of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, the reader becomes acquainted with the dif-



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ferent sociological model analyses, which, in defining the “Mittelstand”, are sometimes based on income, sometimes on the level of education, sometimes on the entrepreneurial activity of an initiative, self-responsible, risk-taking and imaginative personality. At the same time, the entrepreneur of a midsize company is always obliged to his employees, his suppliers and his customers in a special way as a personal entrepreneur.

To summarise this part, one can say that the social “Mittelstand” is made up of the self-employed and the employed “Mittelstand”. Just as the self-employed “Mittelstand” appears on the market as a self-responsible producer of goods or services, the authors see the employed “Mittelstand” as those persons who carry out management and responsibility functions as well as their decision-making function on behalf of others.

## The “Mittelstand” in figures

The authors go on to show that it is precisely the self-employed and dependent “Mittelstand”, which in Germany today comprises about 5 million people in the first group and about 8 million in the second, that prove to be the most effective performers in our society. Their efforts have so far led to ever greater general prosperity and still provide the greater part of our economic life today. For example, two thirds of our labour market is covered by them; they generate 63 % of

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### “Without a strong ‘Mittelstand’ ...”

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all taxes and pay 56 % of all social security contributions. Thus they support both the lower class and the largest part of the subsidies to the corporations. The “Mittelstand” of both groups and its members make up almost 47 % of the total population in Germany. That is about 40 million inhabitants. Their personal views may not be identical; their concern to continue to exist in the market as human resources companies should bring them together and make them realise their strength.

#### “Power economy” versus “personal market economy”

Although they are the real bearers of the decentralised regulatory systems of democracy and market economy, their political weight remains underrepresented. They have hardly any time to organise and operate effective representative bodies. Those that have already been established are not infrequently determined by functionaries who do not really do justice to the concerns and legitimate needs of the “Mittelstand”. It is one thing that a sprawling national administrative technocracy devised by EU bureaucrats, with a jumble of application forms and documentation requirements, makes it more difficult for staffing companies to perform their work and live their lives. But it is quite another that globally active large corporations are being courted by the state with favours that make a mockery of a free-market economy and the constantly invoked free competition. In this way, the top performers of the free “Mittelstand” are being worn down. The following quotation succinctly summarises the concern of the authors, to which they insist:

“The capital feudalism of the upper group strives for central dictatorship rather than the will of the people and power economy rather than market economy, as

well as global monopoly rather than competition from equal competitors.

On the other hand, parts of the lower class strive for an ever stronger welfare state (redistribution) with a guarantee of provision instead of personal achievement and performance.

Bourgeois society is thus not a fixed but a latent system of order, which must be ‘defended’ again and again against the power claims of the two fringe groups if it is not to be pulverised.” (p. 21)

Thus, it is by no means certain that the personal freedom and self-responsibility of citizens will generally remain politically secure. It is constantly threatened by the power claims of big capital (which wants to rule) or the redistribution claims of the lower class (which demands the determination of the benefit yields of the middle and upper classes), but also by the supra-national concentration of power of the Eurocracy as well as by world monopolies and world financial powers (globalisation) (p. 22).

#### For the common good and general prosperity

Professor Dr. Eberhard Hamer is the best-known German researcher of the “Mittelstand”. He founded the Mittelstandsinstitut Niedersachsen 45 years ago. Since then, in more than 30 books and countless articles, he has tirelessly pointed out that the economic sciences focus too much on the 6 % corporations and their conditions and do not correctly assess the importance of the “Mittelstand”. That is why Professor Hamer has always focused his attention on the person of the entrepreneur and their personal enterprises. He thus founded the “personal market economy”. Hamer was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit for this scientific work. After the economics of the “Mittelstand”, he also recently founded the sociology of the “Mittelstand”.

With his conviction that the midsize personal enterprise is an enterprise of

people, with people, for people, he emphasises like no other the importance of the “Mittelstand” for the common good in all areas of society: for prosperity, for culture, for education and above all for the preservation and expansion of democratic conditions.

#### The pandemic – a caesura for the “Mittelstand”?

The fact that the Corona pandemic poses such an unprecedented threat to the “Mittelstand”, their staff companies and their employees, the extent of which cannot yet be estimated, does not need to be emphasised at this point. The attentive observer of economic policy events has seen this for a long time. It is precisely the globally active large corporations that have been able to increase their profits exorbitantly as a result of the pandemic. The “Mittelstand” is struggling to survive. The fact that a pandemic threatens large sections of the bearers of socio-political conditions worthy of protection is more than worrying, considering what its representatives stand for. •

\* The term “Mittelstand” mainly applies to mid-sized firms as opposed to larger listed companies and most importantly “Mittelstand” companies are characterised by a common set of values and management practices. “Mittelstand” commonly refers to a group of unique businesses in German-speaking countries (and Britain) which are very successful, and are usually capable of surviving economic turbulence. Generally small and medium-sized enterprises, they differ from regular SME’s. Ludwig Erhard, the Economics Minister who crafted post-war West Germany’s economic miracle (German: Wirtschaftswunder) warned against reducing the Mittelstand to a mere quantitative definition, but instead emphasised more qualitative characteristics which embody the German Mittelstand, as it is “much more of an ethos and a fundamental disposition of how one acts and behaves in society.” (Wikipedia)

<sup>1</sup> Hamer, Eberhard; Jörgens, Olaf. *Wer ist Mittelstand? (Who is Mittelstand?) Sociology of the Middle Class*. Published by the Mittelstandsinstitut Niedersachsen, Büsingen 2021, ISBN 978-3-00-066875-3.

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# The German Greens want to come to power at any price

## An Internet APO<sup>1</sup> is running for political influence

by Karl-Jürgen Müller

Who still remembers? On 18 May 2019, just before the elections to the EU Parliament, the *YouTube* platform posted a video by the German “influencer” *Rezo* on the internet. The title of the video was: “The destruction of the CDU”. For almost 55 minutes, the video sharply attacked the German governing parties CDU, CSU and SPD, as well as the AfD and the FDP. *Rezo* accused in particular the CDU and CSU for all sorts of things, not least a failure in climate policy. At the end of the video, he indirectly gave a recommendation to vote for *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*.

The video was the most viewed *YouTube* video in Germany in 2019. By the day of the European elections in Germany on 26 May, it had been viewed more than 10 million times. In view of the losses of the SPD and CDU and the success of the Greens in the EU Parliament elections, the *German TV station ZDF* spoke at the time of a “*Rezo effect*”. An effect that was made possible also because *Rezo* was widely and favourably reported by the other media.

### The Greens’ APO and not more democracy

*Rezo* is a young man presenting himself as an independent, alternative observer and commentator of political events. He appears determined and decidedly aggressive, assumes that the truth is on his side, and his choice of words and diction have nothing to do with a democratic discussion, but stage “rage” and “indignation”. However, every word, every gesture and facial expression is carefully rehearsed. *Rezo* has been well prepared.

With the “*Rezo effect*” at the latest, the power potential of the internet, especially when someone acts rudely, could have been generally realised. This is known from other contexts, for example the worldwide “colour revolutions”. This political power potential has nothing to do with the culture of dialogue, is in no way legitimised and its possibilities for manipulation go far beyond those of printed media. The pursued emotionalisation is evoking aggressive affects, not compassion.

*Rezo*, one can assume, is part of the extra-parliamentary opposition (APO) of today’s German Greens, who in public almost only pretend to be quite bourgeois. *Rezo* is not an isolated phenomenon. There is a system to all this. Public appearances like *Rezo*’s are on the increase. The target group is mainly young people. This has nothing to do with more democracy; at best, one must speak of an abuse of democratic rights.

### Influencers in politics

*ep.* Influencers today not only play a crucial role in personalised advertising, but they are also increasingly influencing the shaping of public opinion and the balance of power in the political sphere. When using influencers, it is assumed that they have more impact than normal advertising, for example with celebrities. Influencers are more or less someone like you and me, nothing special, you can compare yourself to them and don’t have to feel inferior. In reality, however, they are set up and accompanied by cameramen, etc.

*Barack Obama*’s campaign team focused on individualised advertising using influencers in the 2012 US election campaign. By means of data analysis, every single voter was recorded and measured. From the beginning, *Obama* planned a vigorous outfit of volunteers to talk to as many voters as possible. Thanks to digitally created algorithms, the team knew who would be worth talking to. As a result, 21,000 volunteers knocked on 890,000 doors and

had 350,000 conversations in the highly competitive state of Ohio alone in the last four days before the election. The volunteers had smartphones with them, with apps from which they could extract the exact wording of the opening or closing of the conversation for the respective person. The online advertising was also tailored to each voter in this campaign, achieving more impact than prime-time TV ads. Voters could be targeted individually through phone calls and social media.

In a sense, influencers take on the role of campaigners. They don’t knock on people’s doors, but report to them on their smartphones. Assuming that their followers identify strongly with their “stars”, this makes it much clearer to calculate which influencers should be considered as advertising ambassadors.

Source: *Nymoen, Ole; Schmitt, Wolfgang M. Die Influencer. Die Ideologie der Werbekörper. (The influencers. The ideology of the advertising bodies.) Berlin, Suhrkamp 2021*

### “*Rezo* destroys COVID-19 politics”

On 5 April 2021 *Rezo* posted a new video on *YouTube*: “*Rezo* destroys COVID-19 politics”. As early as 12 am on 9 April, the video had more than 1 million views and more than 90 000 thumbs up, according to *YouTube*. The style of the video is similar to that of April 2019, but it is much shorter, lasting only 13 minutes. Key messages of the video are: From the beginning, the German government (here, however, *Rezo* limits himself entirely to CDU and CSU politicians) had totally failed in COVID-19 politics; CDU politicians had proven to be corrupt; scientific findings and scientists were ignored; in view of further “crises” (here he mentions the climate issue again) CDU and CSU were unacceptable. This new video was also received favourably by many other media.

### Annalena Baerbock wants to become chancellor

On 19 April 2021, *Annalena Baerbock* and *Robert Habeck*, the two leaders of *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*, told the public who the party should send as its candidate for chancellor in the upcoming federal elections (the date is 26 September). It is *Annalena Baerbock*. Since the last federal elections, the German Greens see themselves in a strong upswing. The results in

the state elections since 2017 and the elections to the EU Parliament have strengthened the party’s belief that it can also gain power at the federal level. The only obstacles on the way to the chancellorship are the CDU and the CSU. They must now be weakened by all means.

As things stand today, it can be assumed that the federal government’s COVID-19 policy will be a central election campaign issue. In the meantime, it was possible to bring the polyphony and confusion over COVID-19 policy to a level that made many citizens lose their bearings. The poll figures for the governing parties, but especially for the CDU and CSU, are correspondingly bad. In the classic question of who they would vote for next Sunday if federal elections were held, the opinion research institute *Forsa* came up with a total of only 27 per cent for the CDU and CSU on 7 April 2021 and already 23 per cent for *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*. As a reminder: In the 2017 federal elections, the CDU and CSU together had achieved almost 33 per cent of the vote and *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* less than 9 per cent.

### Why is no one asking about the political achievements of the Greens?

However, an answer to the question regarding the political achievements of the

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### "The German Greens ..."

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German Greens since 2017 is still missing. Moreover: this question is not even asked. However, being "green" is in line with the zeitgeist and pervades almost all political parties. Better formulated: All these parties have committed themselves to a "Great Reset" calling itself sustainable and a "Green New Deal" and want to be "green" today. And the German Greens have an easy time pretending to be the "original".

In the process, they are putting up smoke screens. Or what are voters supposed to imagine in concrete terms when the party's programme for the federal elections in September is entitled "Germany. Everything is possible"? These are word games with ambiguities familiar from psycho- and other manipulation techniques. Aren't such word games distracting from the serious question of what a Green chancellor would really mean for Germany?

#### More war and less freedom

A few weeks ago, this newspaper<sup>2</sup> argued that a foreign policy under Green leadership would drive Germany even more towards a US-oriented, ideologically coloured sharp confrontation with Russia and China. The danger of war would increase.

Isn't it high time to take a closer look at what the German Greens are up to? The "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" of 31 March 2021 made a start – from their point of view. The title of the analysis was: "The Greens are all kinds of things – but not liberal". The article deals with the above-mentioned election programme of the German Greens. The article formulates sentences that everyone in Germany should also look at more closely: "What would a Germany look like that was shaped according to the will of the Greens? The answer in the party programme is: It would be a quota-based republic with a demanding and allocating state permeating almost all areas."

Jutta Ditfurth  
@jutta\_ditfurth

#Gruene: „Lass uns Krieg führen, sonst tun's andere.“  
#Baerbock will Kanzlerkandidatin werden. Grüne wissen, dass sie nur mit Zustimmung zu Kapitalismus + Kriegsbereitschaft in Bundesregierung kommen. 2021 mit #CDU.  
1999-2005 mit #SPD (Jugoslawienkrieg, Hartz4, Leiharbeit usw)

Tagesspiegel @Tagesspiegel · 30. Nov. 2020  
#Baerbock will die #Bundeswehr stärken: Die Grünen-Vorsitzende plädiert für eine größere Rolle Europas in der globalen Verteidigungspolitik. Sonst füllen autoritäre Staaten die Lücke. tagesspiegel.de/politik/gruene...

7:51 vorm. · 30. Nov. 2020 · Twitter for iPhone

Jutta Ditfurth  
@jutta\_ditfurth 30 November 2020  
#Greens: "Let's wage war, or others will do it."  
#Baerbock wants to be candidate for chancellor. Greens know they can only get into federal government with approval for capitalism + readiness for war. 2021 with #CDU. 1999-2005 with #SPD (Yugoslavia war, Hartz4, temporary work etc.)  
Quote of Tagesspiegel Tweet:  
@Tagesspiegel of 30 November 2020  
#Baerbock wants to strengthen the #Federal Armed Forces: The Green Party leader pleads for a greater role for Europe in global defense policy. Otherwise, authoritarian states would fill the gap.  
<https://tagesspiegel.de/politik/gruene...>

## What the German Greens want in government

### Excerpts from the election manifesto of Bündnis 90/ Die Grünen for the federal elections on 26 September 2021

"The *transatlantic partnership* remains a pillar of German foreign policy, but it must be renewed, framed in European terms, multilateral and oriented towards clear common values and democratic goals. As the core of a renewed EU transatlantic agenda, we propose to give a strong joint impetus to global climate policy, starting from the Paris climate goals. We are also committed to good cooperation with the US on digitalisation, strengthening multilateralism, trade issues and health. We want to work together for the global protection of human rights and a rules-based world order. This includes an understanding on how to deal with authoritarian states such as China and Russia. Even with the new US administration, the security policy focus of the USA will not again be primarily on Europe. The EU and its member states must adopt more foreign and security policy responsibility themselves. This applies in particular to the security of the EU's eastern neighbours as well as the Baltic states and Poland. We want to conduct the transatlantic debate at many levels, including the respective federal and

local ones, and thus create sustainable, diverse social networks. [...]

Russia has increasingly turned into an authoritarian state and is more and more aggressively undermining democracy and stability in the EU and in the common neighbourhood. At the same time, the democracy movement in Russia is strengthening. We want to support the courageous civil society that stands up to the increasingly harsh repression by the Kremlin and that is fighting for human rights, democracy and the rule of law, and we want to intensify the exchange with them. The EU has formulated clear conditions for easing the sanctions imposed on Russia because of the annexation of Crimea, which is against international law, and the military action against Ukraine. We will stick to these and tighten the sanctions if necessary. We are demanding that the Russian government implement their commitments under the Minsk Agreement. The Nord Stream 2 pipeline project is not only harmful in terms of climate and energy policy, but also in terms of geostrategy – especially for the situation in Ukraine – and must therefore be stopped."

(Translation Current Concerns)

"The Green state is a redistributive state." "Diversity" is to be "lavishly subsidised". The German Greens are about a "'global socio-ecological transformation' that knows only planetary boundaries". "There is an abysmal imbalance in the Green core concern to 'unburden us in everyday life' through rules, laws and prohibitions: The Greens open the door to the tutelage of the state. They distrust the human being and fear his freedom."

The article concludes with a question to pass on: "On the whole, the Greens are neither liberal nor bourgeois, but they are being elected by more and more bourgeois liberals. I wonder if the latter ever glanced at the guidelines the Greens want to use to regulate Germany, transform the economy and rebuild society."

<sup>1</sup> The APO, Extraparliamentary Opposition was a political protest movement in West Germany during the latter half of the 1960s and early 1970s, forming a central part of the German student movement. Its membership consisted mostly of young people disillusioned with the grand coalition (Grosse Koalition) of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Since the coalition controlled 95 percent of the Bundestag, the APO provided a more effective outlet for student dissent. Its most prominent member and unofficial spokesman was *Rudi Dutschke*.

<sup>2</sup> What will happen if Germany goes "green"? in: *Current Concerns* No. 1 of 20 January 2021

### "The 'Great Reset' – Alternatives"

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gold in the world for our current monetary state, even if it were distributed justly. The prize of gold would have to sky-rocket astronomically. Therefore, I think we will be better off if we establish a trustworthy world currency system and the population actually trusts this money. In that case the value is secured. Currencies are based on the trust of their users.

### The wars in the Middle East and the one in Libya were all monetary wars for resources

*You are talking about a "struggle for the world monetary order". Could you explain that further please?*

All the wars in the Middle East and the one in Libya were monetary wars for resources. *Saddam Hussein* had stepped out of line by no longer using the dollar for his petrol deals and accepting Renminbi from the Chinese. That's why he had to be toppled. The same was true for *Gadhafi* who aimed for a Afro-Dollar with gold-backing and had entered into negotiations about natural gas with the Russians. That was a capital sin against the system and most notably against the French as well, who were the main protagonists of the war against Libya. Most people are not aware of the fact that the *Afro-Franc* still exists in the former colonies. When independence was granted to them, three conditions were imposed on them:

1. The currency has to remain the Franc.
2. Valuta reserves must be stored in the French National bank.
3. Infrastructure such as roads, railways etc. in which the French had invested were to be bought back at a prize set in France.

Those countries were enslaved financially this way. And as soon as one of their governments had protested against this a "people's uprising" would break out and be supported by the Foreign Legion so that the government was silenced. *Gadhafi* had mounted massive resistance, so he had to go and now chaos reigns there. The American interest did play a role, too. The gold-backed *Afro-Franc* was a challenge for the Dollar as well. Both of them, the Franc and the Dollar, worked hand in hand there.

In geopolitics we have increasing confrontation as well, organized mainly by the USA and NATO, in Europe directed mainly against Russia because they don't fit into the system either, and in the Far East against the Chinese. The USA will not win this race unless they turn to violence. Therefore, I am very concerned about a Third World War might break out unless we radically question and reform our current energy, trade and financial order. We Europeans should tell the Americans: "Look friends, we want to remain your friends, but

we will no longer put up with the way you try to abuse us. We will make suggestions instead where we should go from here. You can be a world-class centre of innovation, production and of trade but no world bullying power." The USA will soon be unable to finance their 800 military bases around the world.

### The problem of the "deep state"

*Why don't the USA change their policies?* We have the problem of the "deep state" in the USA, the military-industrial complex, which guides official policies indirectly. Unfortunately, all weapons, once produced, have a tendency to be utilised eventually. Therefore, wars get started in all corners of the world. That is the reason why we need to demand, according to the bible verse: Swords into plough shares! Everybody will find enough potentials for development at home, technologies can be adapted to all specific conditions! Be innovative, use your phantasy and creativity towards the common good instead of arms races. All states with huge armies had poor inhabitants, somewhere the money for the armament needs to come from. We need to educate people about this so that the power of the military-industrial and financial complex will be broken. Interestingly, the former general *Dwight Eisenhower* warned against it when he left office as president: Get rid of the power which the military-industrial complex gained during the war and uses now to dominate politics.

### Make peace with a different monetary order

*Could peace be achieved with a different monetary order? How could that work?*

I need to get into more details at this point: What we have right now is a monetary system based on debt, the compound interest is its main inherent problem. Mathematical laws of geometric series apply here, most people no longer know the old rule of 70 – 70 divided by the interest rate gives you after how many years the capital has doubled. With an interest rate of 5% that means, after 14 years your capital has doubled. This is crazy. At the moment we have reduced the interest rate to zero, so that the states may accumulate debt. And I predict, because that's what has always happened in financial history, that the financial complex will announce a crisis: inflation and danger for the economy need to raise interest in order to slow the economy down. At that point everybody is in high debts and can no longer pay it off, at that point the financial complex poses as the saviour and says: We will buy out all companies and save factories and jobs ... and they even get praised for it.

We have an incredible number of concepts for innovative monetary systems. For

instance, crypto currencies which are in reality phantasy products and remain valid exactly as long as people believe in their existence. Crypto currencies are an illusion and people who want to invest money and are driven by greed get abused.

But there are concepts for regional currencies as well, and much more. I think there should be a combination: We can organize sustainable time currencies on the regional level in local circuits, for trade beyond the region we need an international monetary treaty which agrees on flexible exchange rates according to the respective values. On the national level we need to bring the authority to create money back to the states. In this regard I support the "full money" concept to make sure it is not the banks who produce the money after all. Getting rid of the compound interest is crucial.

### Vollgeld (sovereign money) and separate banking system

The main problem at present is, as I have already explained, the compound interest. The financial wealth, as reflected by the numbers on the bank accounts, rise to the mathematical infinite this way. I think one can agree that there is no compound interest. No law is violated by such an agreement. Every monetary system is man-made and can be developed further according to fixed rules. The banks should provide their traditional services in a "sovereign money" system for an appropriate fee and should be organised according to the separate banking system. For these structural changes we will have to spend a few cents but this would be worth it because it would also set the banks free to once again fulfil their genuine purpose. One banker told me: I used to provide financial advice to entrepreneurs as their house banker, people used to come to me with their visions and now, according to the new guidelines, I am obliged to sell something to them!

### Shrink the role of money again

*Which role should money play in the future?*

I think we should shrink the role of money to once again serve as a trading standard and as a value storage standard without compound interest. Then it can be a useful tool. Money was invented in several steps. Originally some natural produce was used as a standard. That is why money was called "pecunia"<sup>2</sup> in the Roman Empire – cattle were the standard. Afterwards coinage was invented in Asia Minor. Gold and silver were scarce resources and therefore could serve as standard. Much later banker's drafts were invented. Gold and silver coins were deposited with a banker who issued a draft which entitled me to withdraw my coins

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### "The 'Great Reset' – Alternatives"

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should I need them. The bankers eventually realised that not all coins were reclaimed at any point in time and they started to issue more drafts than they held as physical gold and silver. That way our current fractioned monetary order came into being which we can get under control again by introducing "sovereign money", i.e. the amount of circulating money is controlled by the national bank and supervised by an independent currency commission. This concept is already well developed. My colleague *Huber* has laid out quite nicely how this should work in his book "Moderne Monetarisierung" (*Monetary Modernisation*). This does not serve the interests of the high finance elites and therefore it is attacked viciously and decried as utopic. But all utopias come true eventually as soon as the old system no longer functions well enough.

#### Promoting peace with regional and national solutions

Peace will always be promoted mainly by regional and national solutions. A currency is the custom-made suit of each national economy. We did something horrible in Europe. We threw the Southern nations together with the Northern ones into one currency brew. The Southerners used to down-value their national currencies whenever their trade balance would require it and were able to accumulate debts to only such an amount as they could handle. These countries were admitted to the Euro zone. Initially this was a license to unhinged debt accumulation since the Euro community would back it up. But after a while it was announced: "Now we have to pull the emergency brake" and austerity measures were imposed on them. Notably Greece, Italy, Spain. Now we see the consequences concretely.

"External debasement" was replaced by "internal debasement" and people in these countries were impoverished.

*How would you assess the financial situation of our states? And what would you suggest?*

Considering the current amount of state debts, I am afraid the media are right to discuss some general "deliveraging contribution" because something like that will most likely be unavoidable. Bluntly speaking that means that people are expropriated and new taxes imposed on them. In other words, once again the masses of common people will pay rather than the few on top. I think there are a number of concepts which could be implemented easily.

#### Pro turnover tax on capital ...

One way would be a general turnover tax on capital (Kapitalumsatzsteuer) of, say

0.1%, that's almost nothing and ranges within the current banking conditions but it would secure about a third of our budgets and we could repay state debt. Taxation of financial transactions is under debate all the time, I would de-mystify the issue and focus on a general turnover tax on capital so that not only certain financial transactions would be taxed, what invariably triggers the argument that such a tax would hamper international trade. A general turnover tax on capital would be easy to collect by retaining 0,1% of every capital transfer, no matter how big or small the turnover is.

The second idea would be an internet tax of one cent per Megabyte. That's a huge source to repay state debt. All internet giants admit this would be technically easy to implement. There could be individual exemption limits, say for private use of the internet, the health care system, education and basic supply systems could be exempt if necessary.

This would be the second area.

#### ... and a general wealth tax for the super-rich

The third approach which springs to mind immediately but is the hardest to implement would be a general wealth tax to be paid by the super-rich. Assuming a 5% growth rate and a 50% tax on wealth growth this would amount to 2,5% of the original fortune and already enough to pay the debt of the entire world. In other words, solutions are within our grasp but we have to propagate and most importantly: implement them, rather than trying to suck the Little Man dry.

#### We have to sit down together and everybody may share their ideas.

*What needs to be done in order to bring the different approaches about the question of a new monetary order to a good solution?*

We have to sit down together and everybody may share their ideas. We have to acknowledge that the goal should be to get together rather than everybody showing off their respective brilliant ideas. Everybody needs to be prepared to lower one's sight, get involved and accept other ideas. And at the end after a solution has been agreed upon, we say: Now we simulate a reality check and pin down how this would work in real life. We need to get beyond the phantasy threshold, nobody benefits if we keep assuring each other how ideal a world would be in which we don't need money, everybody gets for free what he or she needs and so on. You can't nail this pudding to the wall. I am an old practitioner and therefore I would say, once we have come to an agreement, we need to establish audits and supervisory bodies so that we

can find out to what degree our concept is viable and fruitful.

#### A country like Switzerland can serve as a blueprint

A country like Switzerland can serve as a blueprint to a certain extent. Despite all flaws Switzerland is dedicated to the common good because citizens have a say in matters which affect them. I would argue I wish to have a democracy-compliant economy rather than a market-compliant democracy, how Ms *Merkel* put it. This is in reality the capitulation of democracy. In short: a democracy of the Swiss model with the people's referendum as a possible emergency brake, decentralisation, participation of the citizens rather than expertocracy.

Finally, regarding the question: "This is all hot air only, where is your power leverage?" I keep quoting *Victor Hugo*: "Nothing else in the world...not all the armies... is so powerful as an idea whose time has come." *Abraham Lincoln* summed it up nicely: "You can fool all the people some of the time and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

*Herr Professor Wohlmeyer, thank you very much for the interview.* •

<sup>1</sup> *Colonial Scrip* (literally voucher of the colonies) was a paper money which was issued by the colonies prior to the revolution of 1775, as opposed to coins. It was a totally different from the continental currency which was issued during the American revolution in-order to finance the war efforts and which was rapidly devalued. *Colonial Scrip* was not backed by either gold or silver and therefore the colonies were able to control its value. This was a revolutionary economic concept at the time, while the conventional European monetary system required the governments to accumulate debts with the banks and pay interest for them in gold and silver as the only acceptably modes of payment. This is known as the monetary system in which bank notes are "bills of debt". *Colonial Scrip* on the other hand were "bills of credit", issued by the government and backed by the credit of the government so that no interest had to be paid. This made a huge contribution to securing the wealth of the colonies and reduced spending of the colonial governments. The governments charged low interests when lending this paper money to their population. Land was the backing system. The interests reduced the tax burden of the people and contributed to their wealth. This currency was created when a shortage of gold and silver hampered trade and a barter system became prevalent. One after the other all colonies issued their own paper money to stimulate trade. The governments were able to reduce the amount of circulating money by issuing taxes which enabled some colonies to eradicate inflation completely. Each colony had their own currency and some were managed better than others. All these currencies were outlawed by the British parliament in their *Currency Act* after *Benjamin Franklin* had explained their advantages to the *British Board of Trade*. The prohibition of the currencies caused a depression in the colonies which *Franklin* and many others believed was the main reason for the American revolution.

<sup>2</sup> The Latin word "pecunia" for money, property, assets, coin is derived from the Latin word "pecus" for cattle.

# A culture of going above and beyond

by Carl Bossard



Carl Bossard  
(Bild zvg)

*The political philosopher Hannah Arendt said that passion for the world gives rise to passion for pedagogy. This attitude can achieve a lot in schools. A search for clues.*

During clean-up efforts I came across an old article. It is the story of the Ticino postman *Guerino Saglini*. He worked for the post office all his life. When he retired, the “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” asked him what makes a good postman. “*Passione! Passion!*” said Saglini succinctly. Not a day did he go to work without joy, he added modestly.<sup>1</sup>

## Every action is formed by how it is done

The people of Biasca appreciated the postman Saglini. He had a kind word for everyone, and even saluted them with a cheerful “*buona giornata*”. Perhaps the secret of his work lies in the simple phrase: “*I loved this job.*” During 46 years. Saglini, a passionate postman, brought his personality into his work. This was reflected in how he worked through his way of being active, his way of thinking and his language.

“*Every action is formed by how it is done.*” How it is done is more important than the job itself. The phrase goes back to the political philosopher *Hannah Arendt*. Saglini, the passionate postman, distributed letters and newspapers; that was his work, his daily job. But he made an impact on the people of Biasca through how he did his job. He created a relationship between himself and his postal customers.

## The form constitutes the content

“*The world lies between people*”, *Hannah Arendt* emphasised when she expressed her gratitude for the prestigious “*Lessing-Preis der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg*” (Lessing Prize of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg) in 1959. <sup>2</sup> And this “*between,*” according to *Arendt*, is decisive. It is here that the common world of many people in their diversity and difference is formed.

And a shared world is also formed in the classroom – between teachers and their students,

in the interaction of different generations. That is why this “*in-between*” is so important – the emotional, the relational, the dialogical attitude. It arises and exists in how the teacher acts, thinks and speaks with young people and thereby how he affects them. To put it in old-fashioned terms, one could speak of the half-forgotten role model. Teaching does not primarily have an effect through what is taught – as fundamental as it might be – but rather through the already mentioned how of thinking and acting. The form constitutes the content. This primacy is the principle of all pedagogical action. Such a fundamental law leads to a culture beyond the mentality of mere accomplishment.

## It is in the how that the person shows himself

A teacher can literally hide behind the what, behind the things and subject matters, behind the contents, methods and teaching aids. But no one can retreat behind his way of acting, his how. It is in the how that the person shows himself. And it is the person who has an effect in the classroom: with his commitment, with his passion for the world, with his *feu sacré* for the cause – and thus for the students. Teaching depends decisively on the factor that an earlier literature called “*teacher personality*”. Political correctness forbids the term today, but it still applies. Teachers bring their personality to the classroom – not simply their knowledge or, as it is called today, their “*professional com-*

petence.” And it is to this personality that young people build a trusting relationship.

“*When she talked about shapes and numbers, her cheeks glowed and her eyes sparkled, just like when children talk about chocolate ice cream.*”<sup>3</sup> This is how one professional woman remembers her vivid primary teacher. Years later, she still sees her eyes and cheeks, feels the atmosphere and senses the joy of learning, as she openly confesses.

## The inspiring teacher as reading facilitator

There was a teacher at work with a passion for the world of teaching and thus a passion for pedagogy. A second example shows how this passion can work and what it can achieve: Leading young people to read and inspiring them to read books is one of the most urgent and responsible tasks of a good school today. The way to do this is through guided, consistent reading training and inspiring literature lessons. Professor *Klaus Gattermeier* emphasises the importance of the teacher. He trains teachers at the University of Passau. It depends, says the German reading researcher without illusions, “*purely on the individual skills and enthusiasm of the teacher*”.<sup>4</sup> He has been able to prove his statement in numerous empirical studies.

Teachers as crucial reading facilitators have an impact through their example and enthusiasm. It is the how, that – via the what – creates life-long readers.

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“*And a shared world is also formed in the classroom – between teachers and their students, in the interaction of different generations. That is why this ‘in-between’ is so important – the emotional, the relational, the dialogical attitude.*” (Picture keystone)

**"A culture of going above and beyond"**

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**Efficiency is not enough**

Guerino Saglini, a postman by passion, retired early. Why? In the course of a postal reform, an inspector from Bern reprimanded him. Using a stopwatch, he recorded Saglini's work steps and measured his delivery efficiency. "To take your hat off to everyone? That's too expensive [for Swiss Post]!" the inspector from the Bern headquarters told him. Saglini drew the consequences; he quit his job.

**The how cannot be measured**

The functionary only measured the what, the output. The how cannot be quantified. Every good teacher knows how important this how is, every committed teacher has internalised this. This "how" cannot be measured, which is often forgotten today. According to "Lehrplan 21", every piece of knowledge imparted at school should be able to be controlled and quantified as a skill. Competence grids formulate the learning effects; they are transferred into a testable format and recorded using the

measurement methods of empirical educational research. It is not uncommon for the findings to result in rankings.

The management has reduced Saglini to his efficiency and thus downgraded him to his what. Teachers are in a similar position; this is the view of someone who was a teacher himself, the poet *Peter Bichsel*. School teachers have "long since [...] become educational executives," he laments. 5 And many teachers must probably agree with him.

- <sup>1</sup> "Ins Licht gerückt: 16.862 Tage für die Post," (Shone in the light: 16,862 days worked for Swiss Post) in: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* of 23 August 2007.
- <sup>2</sup> Kahl, Reinhard. "Hannah Arendt zum 100. Geburtstag: Ihre Aktualität ist ungebrochen," (Hannah Arendt on the occasion of her 100th birthday: She is as relevant as ever) in: *Die Welt* of 10 October 2006.
- <sup>3</sup> Ellinger, Stephan; Brunner, Johannes. *Alp-Traumlehrer. Von flüchtigen Fledermäusen und multikulturellen Frohnaturen. Studierende erinnern sich* (Nightmare- and dream teachers. Of elusive bats and multicultural merry-makers. Students remember) Teilheim: Gemma-Verlag 2015, p. 75.
- <sup>4</sup> Ebbinghaus, Uwe. "Nehmt die Schüler endlich ernst!" (Finally, take the pupils seriously!) In: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of 17 March 2021.
- <sup>5</sup> Bichsel, Peter. "Kinderarbeit im Bildungsvollzug" (Children's work in carrying out education),

in: Bichsel, Peter. *Über das Wetter reden. Kolumnen* (Talking about the weather. Editorial columns) 2012-2015. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp 2015, p. 33f.

Source: *Journal 21* of 25 March 2021**The family is the spiritual root of a person**

The article by *Eliane Perret* in *Current Concerns* No. 6 on 16 March 2021 shows what a family really is and should be. She chose the aspect of the practical relationship in life to portray natural responsibility which is shown in the "family as a place of emotional security". With the described example, the author provides valuable psychological knowledge of which too little is included or known in today's discussion regarding the "family". It is to her credit that her contribution was able to bring the ideologically dominated conflict about the actual concerns of our existence, down to earth or, in other words, put the record straight. It would be desirable for her text to become widespread and it is especially recommended above all for young families.

Urs Graf

**The Canton of Grisons and its contribution to direct democracy in Switzerland****7<sup>th</sup> Scientific Conference of the Research Institute for Direct Democracy****Saturday, 2 October 2021, 9 am to 4.30 pm, Haus der Begegnungen, Klosterweg 16, Ilanz**

ro. The 7<sup>th</sup> scientific conference of the *Forschungsinstitut direkte Demokratie*,

(Research Institute for Direct Democracy, [www.fidd.ch](http://www.fidd.ch)) will focus on research results that show to what extent the Canton of Grisons has promoted direct democracy in Switzerland. With this conference, we would like to show the state of research in this area and encourage further research projects.

In 1583, the French political philosopher *Jean Bodin* makes some revealing remarks about the Swiss Confederation in his main work "Six books on the state". For example, he assigns all

the *Landsgemeinde* places, including the Canton of Grisons, to the "democratic political systems". The "Canton of Grisons places" were "more purely democratic than any other state in terms of constitution and government". In addition to this external description, the sources also contain self-descriptions by the confederates a short time later, apparently earliest for the Canton of Grisons, where the earliest use of the term democracy for the Swiss Confederation is found in 1618 in a specific historical context: "The form of our regiment is democratic." The "democratic form" of the Canton of Grisons is then frequently mentioned as a model in the 19th century when it comes to expanding people's rights. What does "democratic" mean in

different historical contexts and what significance did the pre-modern democratic form of the Canton of Grisons have for the development of modern direct democracy? The conference in Ilanz will pursue these and other questions.

Following last year's conferences on the significance of Catholic conservatism, liberalism and early socialism for direct democracy in Switzerland, as well as the theoretical foundations of natural law and the cooperative principle, the Research Institute dealt with the *Landsgemeinde* and the Canton of Glarus as part of the sixth conference. Now the historical focus will continue to be on the cantons and their contribution to direct democracy. After the Canton of Grisons, the Canton of Ticino is to follow next year.

**Programme**

9.30: Welcome and introduction  
Dr phil. *René Roca*, Head of Research Institute for Direct Democracy  
Dr *Carmelia Maissen*, mayor of Ilanz/Glion

10.00: Dr phil. *René Roca*: "The Canton of Grisons and its contribution to direct democracy in Switzerland – an overview"

10.45: Break

Presentations

11.15. Prof Dr theol. *Jan-Andrea Bernhard*: "Church and state - the effect of

the Ilanz article letters and disputation theses"

12.00: Dr phil. *Florian Hitz*: "The Old Canton of Grisons Referendum. Its practice in the Ancien Régime and its reception by Canton of Grisons legal historians of the first half of the 20th century" (A.R. Ganzoni, Zaccaria Giacometti, Peter Liver)

12.45: Lunch

14.15: Prof em Dr *Jon Mathieu*: "Forms of 'democratic' politics in the early modern Free State of the three Confederations"

15.00: Prof Dr iur. *Stefan G. Schmid*: "Florian Gengel (1834-1905) a theorist of direct democracy from the Canton of Grisons"

15.45: Prof Dr *Randolph C. Head*: "Was there an early modern democracy? A contemporary perspective from a Canton of Grisons point of view" (possibly via video conference)

16.30: Outlook and final discussion with speakers and audience

**Registration: [www.fidd.ch](http://www.fidd.ch)**