

# Current Concerns

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

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

## Neutrality as an indispensable part of Switzerland's independence and security of supply

by Hans Bieri\*



Hans Bieri  
(picture Schweizer  
Bauer)

Our continued commitment to Switzerland's security of supply now requires a firm commitment to Switzerland's comprehensive neutrality.

However, Switzerland's neutrality is being fought more and more fiercely.

There are warring parties who try to stigmatize the neutral position in a conflict as helping the other party and thus directly attack neutrality.

If the Red Cross is resented for statements that do not agree with the opinion of a warring party, then war is also being waged directly against neutrality. If neutrality is attacked, it must defend itself by clarifying the circumstances and the accusations derived from it.

### Attack on a Swiss state principle

Currently, Switzerland as a state is not being attacked, but a principle of the Swiss state is being attacked by saying that Switzerland's neutral non-partisanship for a militarily attacked country is an open partisanship for the attacker.

The party at war presents the course of events in such a way that it is in the right and the opponent is guilty.

But this is the perspective of every warring party.

The neutral, on the other hand, is not subject to the perspective of a warring party. He can and must view the conflict from different directions. He thus has a better view of the conflict process and the reasons for the conflict's origin, which the warring parties want to conceal.

The neutral position is superior to the one-sided perspective. It is closer to the truth and from there it can also open up possible solutions that are not visible and accessible from the perspective of the conflict parties.



Panelists at the SVIL symposium of 29 November 2022: from left to right Peter Bisong, Dr René Roca, Dr Christoph Blocher, Professor Dr Mathias Binswanger, Alexandre Lambert. (picture ev)

Of course, conflict parties who are aware of their superiority do not wait for conflict solutions from neutrals. They therefore consider the neutral position to be superfluous.

However, comprehensive neutrality is indispensable for Switzerland, its development and its position in the world.

We therefore held a symposium on Switzerland's neutrality and security of supply on 29 November 2022. On the same date, exactly 175 years ago, on 29 November 1847, the Sonderbund War came to an end.

In the 700-year history of the development of the Swiss Confederation, it was then once again demonstrated how neutrality and the ability to lead and promote peace processes are interrelated.

Switzerland has persistently won its neutrality with its economic development on a meager basis in the course of its history in the middle of Europe. Switzerland as a state and stable democracy with a secure supply in an open world market is the result of an intensive political refinement process, which could not be more topical in view of the current political aberration in Europe.

### The contribution of the neutral position of Switzerland and its 2014 proposal in the OSCE

Switzerland's proposal was unjustly opposed by a warring party. As a result,

Switzerland's neutrality has increasingly come under fire and has come under massive pressure.

However, because it was clear to everyone in 2014 that Ukraine had committed a war crime by shelling its own population, it was not possible at the time to avoid negotiations and an agreement as proposed in Minsk.

Neutral Switzerland played an important role in this process with its proposal to cantonize the provinces of eastern Ukraine. However, instead of implementing this solution, it was not supported by the United States.

In retrospect, the Western signatories to the Minsk agreement even boasted that they had only signed the Minsk agreement to buy time for Ukraine's military buildup against Russia.

### Observations of the conflict development from a neutral perspective

Neutrality requires constant and attentive monitoring of conflict developments. Neutrality is precisely not an opportunistic retreat into a political niche that is ignorant of all this – as it is accused today – in order to force it to dissolve. The “coalition of the willing”, according to the ideas of the USA, only tolerates joining the ruling war party and not a neutral stance. This is because the

continued on page 2

\* The text is part of the Annual Report of the Swiss Association for Industry and Agriculture (SVIL) for the year 2022 of June 2023. Hans Bieri, dipl. Arch. ETH/SIA, spatial planner, is Managing Director and Chairman of SVIL.

**“Neutrality as an indispensable part ...”**

continued from page 1

neutral stance is based on the fundamental liberal idea that only the clarification of the conflict processes can lead out of the immaturity of war! The neutral stance also enables to recognise threatening assaults by individual actors in their early stages – before the conflict breaks out. This is also the core idea of the OSCE: to maintain the European order after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and to keep it in balance so that no one feels threatened!

This achievement of the OSCE as a peace dividend has hardly interested the USA. As early as 1993, the General Staff of Switzerland had realised that if the USA, through NATO, continued to push its military infrastructures eastwards in Poland and Romania, a conflict with Russia would become inevitable. The USA claimed at the time that these missile bases in Eastern Europe served to defend against ballistic missiles from Iran.

In the aftermath of the coup in Kiev and the reneging on the agreement of 21 February 2014 to hold democratic elections and to wipe them out with a coup Russia occupied Crimea in 2014 because otherwise it would have been added to the US’s network of 800 US military bases worldwide. The previous occupation of Kosovo and the establishment of the US military base at *Bondsteel* broke the OSCE rule in advance and exposed the OSCE’s inability to enforce the agreements. Under this obviously not “rule-based order” and the goal of pushing NATO eastwards, ethnic, religious and spatial economic overlaps were used to enforce conflicts from the outside.

Just two short years earlier, in 2012, the European Football Championships were held in various cities in Poland and Ukraine. In 2014, barely two years later, the Ukrainian army destroyed the show-piece of Donetsk airport, sending a signal of terror to the Russian-speaking population in eastern Ukraine and thereby demonstrating its will, to destroy and its destructive power. Contrary to the agreements – also with the signature of the [current] President of Germany – the agreed new elections were not held, the legally elected government in Kiev was overthrown and a coup government was installed. With violence and crimes in the context of the Maidan that have not been solved to this day, the people and parliament were terrorised, the command structures in the army were replaced and the political opposition was banned. Kiev had issued decrees banning the Russian-speaking population from speaking their own language, suspending pension payments in the eastern provinces and creating a climate of criminal terror through the shelling of residential areas by the state-owned Ukrainian army.

**Imposed self-defence**

Russia can be accused of having occupied Crimea. However, this never gave the Ukrainian government the right to use its army to shell the housing estates of the country’s own population for years, resulting in 13,000 deaths.

Not only does it matter that this action by the Ukrainian government and army is a war crime, it also matters that Ukraine, with this state terror, has inevitably challenged Russia to protect its population, which has strong ties with Russia. It was this that led to the Russian army advancing into Ukrainian territory. And this, *nota bene*, only after repeated requests by Russia to the US to disclose its intentions of arming Ukraine and the objective of massing troops on the borders with the rebellious eastern provinces and to seek a negotiated settlement. The USA never answered these urgent requests by Russia at the end of 2021! On the contrary, the self-defence thus imposed on Russia is now weighted more heavily by the USA, NATO and the EU than the years of shelling residential areas in their own country by the Ukrainian army.

This brings us back to imperialism and the reversion of the equality of all peoples to the rule-based domination of the “value West”. It is a renewed attempt to propagate neo-colonial global domination. Russia has had to experience this since the nineties, economically serving only unilaterally as a “petrol station” (*John McCain*).

**Reminder**

On 24 July 1917, the Russian newspaper “Worker and Soldier” carried the following: “Russia is going through difficult days. The three-year war, which has claimed innumerable victims, has brought the country to exhaustion.” And it warned that “Russia is transformed into a colony of England, America and France”. Two months later – still during the First World War – Russia’s provisional (liberal) government complained that it was “compelled to warn certain foreigners who behave in Russia as Europeans do in Central Africa” (“Labour Way”, 12 September 1917).

The conflict then continued until the Second World War. This was followed by the Soviet Union’s loss-making victory over *Hitler’s* army, which is in doubt

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Now it is being debated that the USA and Great Britain waged war against Russia in Ukraine: some say that the blame lies with Russia – and more precisely in the crossing of the Ukrainian state border by the Russian army on 24 February 2022. The afore mentioned course of the conflict is cut off and replaced by the complaint, set up outside the course of the conflict, that this war is the result of Russia’s autocratic power politics and that NATO must stop Russia from invading further states.

This account is just as inconclusive as the claim that NATO’s advance against Russia is to ward off the Iranian threat in order not to have to comply with the OSCE agreements. In other words, rational analysis and reasoning are being sidelined and eliminated. The geostrategic claim to power and the right of the strongest are now openly emerging behind the conflict development that has been built up with small steps for years. The dissolution of the *Warsaw Pact* is ostensibly seen as Russia’s admitted defeat and its assigned role as a regional power as the result of history. The war, in turn, feeds on the hope of the more powerful to be able to enforce its claim to supremacy militarily.

today. The Cold War followed. The fact that the Soviet Union’s offer (*Stalin’s* note of 10 March 1952) to withdraw if Germany did not join NATO and became neutral was rejected also played a role.

This was followed by repeated appeals from Russia, *Putin’s* speech at the Bundestag in 2001, that Germany should no longer be threatened and could turn its attention to economic reconstruction. *Putin’s* legitimate question at the *Munich Security Conference* in 2007 about the purpose of NATO’s advance was not answered. They did not understand this question, they pretended in hypocritical dissimulation.

The “third attempt” to colonise Russia will come down to the existential question of to be or not to be.

It is about the problem of a world economy in which all may participate equally advantageously.

These achievements of the European Enlightenment, to solve the increasing conflicts with orderly methodical thinking, are at stake under penalty of a further progressing immaturity, followed by senseless processes of destruction.

“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.” (*Albert Einstein*)

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

# For neutrality and peace instead of NATO and war

by Sevim Dagdelen



Sevim Dagdelen  
(picture  
Wikipedia)

cc. Upon invitation of the Irish MEPs Clare Daly and Mick Wallace, on 24 June in Dublin, Sevim Dagdelen, member of the Bundestag for the Left Party and member of the German parliamentary committee in charge of foreign policy, gave the

following speech at the conference “Neutrality: Who Cares?”. This conference has demonstrated that parts of the European left have also become aware of the importance of neutrality. In addition to Sevim Dagdelen’s speech, Clare Daly’s speech is also available in the original English version on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hc-awrUb-4gY>) and is well worth listening to.

The war in Ukraine is claiming lives each and every day. In Germany, we have so-called military experts, such as *Florence Gaub*, Director of the Research Division at the *NATO Defense College*, who have publicly declared that we shouldn’t advocate for a ceasefire or for peace negotiations because conflicts have their “internal clock” and only when it has run out is a ceasefire possible. Our response to these cynics of power is that: no, this war must end, and it must end immediately. We need an immediate ceasefire without preconditions and a diplomatic solution. And let me say quite clearly that those who want to make this contingent on prior commitments by either of the warring parties just want this war to continue. This madness must be stopped!

And it appears that an agreement was on the table in March 2022. And it’s a disgrace that the then Conservative UK Prime Minister *Boris Johnson*, in cahoots with the US administration, prevented a deal from being reached! So let’s take a close look at what’s happening.

The war in Ukraine has turned into a dangerous NATO proxy war against Russia.

And this war has the potential to escalate, also thanks to the supply of more and more and increasingly heavy weapons. Anyone who wants to prevent a nuclear war in Europe must stand up to this escalation!

And apparently there’s more at stake here, that NATO countries are crossing the line from non-belligerent to belligerent parties. They’re doing this in the form of cooperation between intelligence services,

by advising and coordinating liaison officers on the ground, by exchanging technical and tactical expertise, and by comparing situational pictures to the point of joint situation planning and training Ukrainian soldiers on the use of Western weapons on a massive scale.

## Stop the spiral of escalation, strengthen peace initiatives

The recent attacks with British Storm Shadow missiles represent a fresh escalation in this regard. This spiral of escalation must be stopped. The supplies of weapons to the war zone must be stopped!

Brazil, China and six African countries have launched peace initiatives and travelled to Kyiv and Moscow. Why isn’t this being supported in Washington, in Berlin, in London or even in Dublin?

I often hear people ask what the problem with NATO is since, or so they argue, it’s a purely defensive alliance. But anyone who claims that NATO is a purely defensive alliance either isn’t familiar with the history of the military pact or is knowingly lying to the public.

Didn’t NATO wage war in Afghanistan for 20 years? Didn’t NATO invade Yugoslavia in 1999 without a mandate from the UN Security Council? Didn’t NATO wage a murderous war to implement regime change in Libya in 2011 in violation of a UN Security Council resolution? Wasn’t it NATO that, despite promises to the contrary, continued to expand further

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“Neutrality is a very precious commodity these days. After all, only those who preserve their neutrality also preserve their democratic sovereignty, a government of the people by the people.”

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and further east right up to Russia’s border? Wasn’t it NATO that, back in 2014, committed itself to a gigantic rearmament programme with the 2 percent target?

## NATO is a warfare alliance

No, NATO is a warfare alliance. Anyone who accedes to it is party to murder and manslaughter as well as to violations of international law, and that’s why it should be dissolved.

And that’s why, also against the backdrop of its proxy war in Ukraine, I have called for Germany’s withdrawal from this military pact and for the withdrawal of the US soldiers after 78 years, who can take their nuclear weapons with them.

And then I’ve heard the argument that NATO is an alliance of democracies

**NEUTRALITY:  
WHO CARES?**

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MORE SPEAKERS TBC

THE LEFT  
IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

against autocrats. It’s astounding that no one is remotely ashamed of propagating such high-grade nonsense. This argument is historically false. NATO never had a problem with fascist dictatorships as members, as in the case of Portugal under *Salazar* or in the case of Greece following the military coup. And today it has no problem with the autocrat *Erdogan* or *Meloni*. But those who enter into pacts with autocrats should please stop claiming that this is a question of democracy and human rights.

And when German tanks are rolling into battle against Russia right now and the German Government, in response to my questions, cannot even rule out the possibility of NATO’s weapons ending up in the hands of Russian Nazis, who are now evidently carrying out attacks against Russia with the support of Ukraine, then we must be worried. We have seen with ISIS in Syria what a Frankenstein created by the West is capable of doing. This policy is despicable!

A few days ago, the EU adopted its 11th package of sanctions against Russia. This time around, extraterritorial sanctions are set to be imposed on third parties. Brussels is not only at risk of becoming a party to the war itself by providing

continued on page 4

# The weaponisation of human rights at the Human Rights Council

by Professor Alfred de Zayas



Alfred de Zayas  
(picture ma)

*The fifty-third session of the UN Human Rights Council meeting now in Geneva could provide a perfect opportunity to advance peace as a human right and to meaningfully support the many roadmaps and blueprints for peace*

*in Ukraine and proposals for peace in all conflict areas in Latin America, Africa and Asia.*

Alas, the Human Rights Council has become predominantly a platform for those who engage in war-mongering and incitement to hatred. Notwithstanding the clear language of Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, many states practice flagrant Russophobia, Sinophobia and other phobias. Article 20 stipulates:

“1. Any propaganda for war shall be prohibited by law.

2. Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law.”

## Commitment to human rights or geopolitical interests?

The collective West, however, rejects this crucial provision of the ICCPR. Most Western states, including the US, even

formulated “reservations” against this article, so that they could happily continue their demonisation of rivals, pre-war incitement to hatred and mid-war fake news and bellicose propaganda.<sup>1</sup>

What does “weaponisation of human rights mean”? Simply the instrumentalisation of human rights for geopolitical purposes. Indeed, we witness how human rights have been hijacked for aggressive purposes. This “weaponisation” has transformed the individual and collective entitlement to assistance, protection, respect and solidarity – based on our common human dignity and equality – into a hostile arsenal to target competitors and political adversaries. In the stockpile of weaponised human rights, the technique of “naming and shaming” has become a sort of ubiquitous Kalashnikov.

## Jargon to legitimise Regime change and interference

Experience shows, however, that naming and shaming fails to alleviate the suffering of victims and only satisfies the strategic aims of certain governments, non-governmental organisations and of a burgeoning human rights industry that instrumentalise human rights for the purpose of destabilising others and often enough to facilitate “regime change”, notwithstanding how undemocratic that may sound and regardless of the *ius cogens* right of self-determination of peoples, and the customary international law principle prohibiting interference in the internal affairs of States. The

whole concept of “colour revolutions” is a propagandistic jargon to justify military interventions in other countries. The “Arab Spring” sounds positive, but did we not usher in an “Arab Winter” in Libya, which continues to live in chaos and misery after our “humanitarian intervention” of 2011?

Just before this Human Rights Council session, my new book “The Human Rights Industry” was published by *Clarity Press*<sup>2</sup>, offering a clear diagnosis, identifying the dysfunctions of the UN human rights promotion and protection mechanisms, and providing a prognosis with concrete, implementable, pragmatic proposals for the rehabilitation of the system.

At a time of global challenges, one would expect that the Human Rights Council would endeavour to provide sustainable global solutions. Unfortunately, the Council has become an arena of gladiators which enjoy throwing daggers at each other rather than sitting down, looking for the root causes of human rights violations and devising preventive strategies so as resolve the grievances instead of merely condemning a particular country or a particular politician. Punishment is not the solution to human rights problems, primarily because punishment is always *ex post facto*, and furthermore because there is no proof that punishment has ever deterred politicians, transnational corporations, weapons contractors, private security companies from committing crimes and abuses.

continued on page 5

## “For neutrality and peace ...”

continued from page 3

military aid on a massive scale and training soldiers.

By doing this, the EU is also intensifying its self-destructive economic war. While the Russian economy is growing by two percent, Germany is hurtling into recession and the EU will soon follow suit. More and more people can no longer afford the skyrocketing prices for energy and food. The combination of a gigantic rearmament programme to the tune of more than 1.1 trillion US dollars by the NATO and EU countries this year, from which only the shareholders of the arms industry benefit, and a self-destructive economic war is poison for our societies. This madness must be stopped!

## Preserve neutrality as a means of democratic sovereignty

Neutrality is a very precious commodity these days. After all, only those who pre-

serve their neutrality also preserve their democratic sovereignty, a government of the people by the people. Many countries in the Global South are having to witness right now how the NATO countries are unwilling to accept their neutrality but want to force them to sign up to the economic war and the deliveries of weapons.

Ireland has a long history of fighting for independence against colonial oppression, of which everyone here can be justifiably proud. Neutrality is at the heart of its hard-fought independence. To defend neutrality also in this day and age is to defend freedom, justice and democracy itself. You have our solidarity in this so

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“To defend neutrality also in this day and age is to defend freedom, justice and democracy itself.”

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In a kind of neo-colonialism, they want to tell the countries of the Global South what to do. The most recent example of this, is the right-wing pro-NATO government of Finland, which wants to cut off development assistance to African countries that it considers to be too pro-Russian on the basis of how they cast their votes in the UN.

very important struggle. Dear friends, let us stand together against this war! Against escalation! For an immediate ceasefire! For peace negotiations! Let’s win the peace and not the war! •

Source: <https://www.sevimdagdelen.de/for-neutrality-and-peace-instead-of-nato-and-war/> of 3 July 2023

### "The weaponisation ..."

continued from page 4

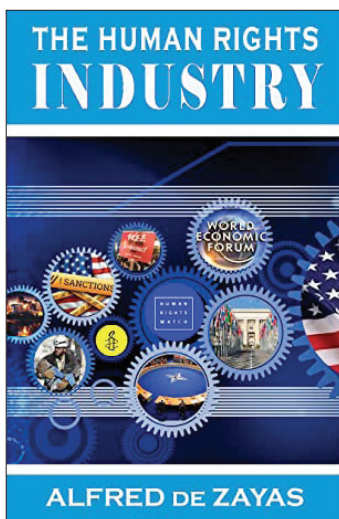
#### Not all ngo's are ngo's

As at every session, I participate in side-events, where I represent various non-governmental organisations. Here again, I must alert the reader about the phenomenon that not all ngo's are genuine. Many are directly in the service of governments or their subsidiary agencies. Many are referred to as "gongo's" or government ngo's. Others are "mixed bags", engaging in very positive activities as advocating the protection of journalists, demanding freedom of the media and access to all sources of information, which is indispensable for any functioning democracy. In this category I can mention *Amnesty International*, *Human Rights Watch*, *Reporters without Borders* and *P.E.N. International*. These ngo's have repeatedly demanded the release of *Julian Assange* and other whistleblowers, true human rights defenders. But sometimes good ngo's engage in inexplicable contradictions and, for instance, endorse or even advocate the imposition of unilateral coercive measures against countries like Cuba, Nicaragua, Syria, Venezuela, although the evidence is overwhelming that such UCM's harm the most vulnerable in those countries and constitute a form of "collective punishment". Indeed, sanctions kill.

To argue that such UCM's are intended to "punish" a country for real or alleged human rights violations is a form of sacrilege or blasphemy. Here again, the medicine is worse than the disease. There are plenty of studies documenting the adverse impact of UCM's, including that of *Jeffrey Sachs* and *Marc Weisbrot* about the counter-productive UCM's imposed by the US against Venezuela.<sup>3</sup>

#### When hatred is promoted in the name of human rights instead of reconciliation ...

I was president of the *P.E.N. Centre Suisse romand* (the P.E.N. Club of the Swiss-



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## Draft Declaration of P.E.N. Internatinalist's Writers for Peace Committee on the Necessity of a cease-fire in Ukraine and mediation for a sustaiaible peace agreement under the UN Charter

We, members of PEN International's Writers for Peace Committee, express our profound concern over the war in Ukraine and commit ourselves to mediation to reach a peace agreement that will guarantee sustainable peace in Europe and prevent a spill-over to other parts of the world.

We reaffirm our commitments expressed in our *Bled Manifesto*, inter alia, "[...]

2. PEN promotes discussion and dialogue between writers from countries in conflict and across regions of the world where wounds are open and political will is unable to address tensions.

3. PEN seeks to bring together people from around the world through literature and discussion amongst writers and with the broad public.

4. PEN considers one of the world's greatest challenges to be the transition from violence to debate, discussion and dialogue. We aim to be active participants in this process promoting where necessary the principles of international law."

We welcome all peace initiatives by writers, institutions and world leaders, particularly those blueprints for peace expressed by Latin American<sup>1</sup>, African<sup>2</sup>, Asian<sup>3</sup> and European<sup>4</sup> leaders. We endorse

the words of Nobel Peace Prize laureate Oscar Arias "It is time for bolder efforts to make peace in Ukraine. War, like fire, can spread out of control, and... this particular conflagration has the potential to start a nuclear war.... The world is as close to the nuclear abyss today as it was during the Cuban Missile Crisis."<sup>5</sup>

We call on writers of all countries to do their utmost to advance the Peace vocation of the Charter of PEN and the Peace mandate of the UN Charter.

<sup>1</sup> <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/05/02/brazil-russia-ukraine-war-lula-diplomacy-active-non-alignment/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/16/world/europe/ukraine-russia-african-peace-mission.html>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zxxx\\_662805/202302/t20230224\\_11030713.html](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202302/t20230224_11030713.html)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.transcend.org/tms/2022/05/a-nordic-initiative-for-peace-in-ukraine-and-lasting-world-peace/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://thehill.com/opinion/international/3565996-nuclear-strategy-and-ending-the-war-in-ukraine/>

Source: <https://www.counterpunch.org/2023/07/03/the-weaponization-of-human-rights-at-the-human-rights-council/> of 3 July 2023

French cantons) in the years 2006-2009 and again 2013-2017. I am still its delegate to the P.E.N. writers for peace committee. In this capacity I attended the annual meeting of the Committee in Bled, Slovenia, which took place 15-18 May 2023. I had expected concrete proposals for peace in all continents, in the Central African Republic, Mali, Sudan, in Israel/Palestine, in Yemen, and, of course, in Ukraine. Unfortunately, this meeting was marred by an atmosphere of war-mongering and hate, precisely what is prohibited by article 20 *ICCPR*. There was a clear majority of hawks and a minority of doves. Here again I witnessed, what I am familiar with in the Human Rights Council, how some ngo's can undermine human rights, in particular the human right to peace, how some ngo's can engage in incitement to hatred rather than attempting to build bridges of understanding.

#### ... arms supplies are advocated and diplomacy is rejected

I was shocked to hear delegations advocating more weapons for Ukraine and rejecting the possibility of a cease-fire or a diplomatic solution to the Ukraine conflict. I was appalled to hear delegates, who are bound by the Charter of P.E.N. to work for peace, who would refuse dialogue and diplomacy. It was surrealistic. For this rea-

son, I drafted a resolution in the name of *P.E.N. Centre Suisse romand* concerning the urgent necessity of diplomacy and mediation in the spirit of the *Bled Manifesto for Peace*. The text of the draft resolution (see box) will be presented at the forthcoming annual meeting of *P.E.N. International* in September 2023.

I also distributed printed copies of my Essay "A Blueprint for Peace in Ukraine", published in *Counterpunch* on 20 December 2022<sup>4</sup>. It is indeed worrisome that not only in the Human Rights Council but also in the world of the non-governmental organizations, the values of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* are all too often forgotten, and persons, who should know better, act in a manner incompatible with the principles that they ostensibly profess.

I conclude with the motto of the Peace of Westphalia: *Pax optima rerum*, peace is the highest good. •

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/ccpr.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.claritypress.com/product/human-rights-industry/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://cepr.net/images/stories/reports/venezuela-sanctions-2019-04.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.counterpunch.org/2022/12/20/a-blueprint-for-peace-in-ukraine/>

Source: <https://www.counterpunch.org/2023/07/03/the-weaponization-of-human-rights-at-the-human-rights-council/> of 3 July 2023

# Record immigration to Switzerland in 2022

## New negotiating mandate with Brussels is unnecessary and harmful

by Dr iur. Marianne Wüthrich

“In 2022, 350,000 people from abroad came to Switzerland. Many were attracted by work, others had to flee, some started an education.” So it reads in *NZZ Folio* of July 2023. 350,000! In our small state with about 25 % of unusable land in the Alps and little free space that is continuously being paved over — for housing, schools, roads and other necessary infrastructure, not to mention the growing energy needs for 8,812 million inhabitants (end of 2022). By the way, on 31 March 2023, the “permanent resident population” of Switzerland already comprised 8,865,270 people, according to the *Swiss Federal Statistical Office* (SFSO). This means that within three months it had already grown again by more than 50,000.

On 21 June, the Federal Council announced that it had “adopted the key parameters for a negotiating mandate with the European Union (EU)”, which were “confidential” for the time being. It intends to adopt a negotiating mandate by the end of 2023. If we consider this intention of the Federal Council together with the immigration figures mentioned, we must bear in mind that on the side of the EU bodies, the free movement of persons is the priority agreement with Switzerland. For years now, Brussels has made no concessions to the adoption of its further development (first and foremost the EU Citizenship Directive), no matter how busily the Federal Council lists all the possible areas it would like to negotiate with the EU.<sup>1</sup>

### Some facts about immigration

– *Permanent and non-permanent population*: The Federal Office of Statistics (FSO) counts as “permanent resident population” “Swiss nationals having their main place of residence in Switzerland and foreign nationals who have held a residence or permanent residence permit for a minimum of 12 months or from a stay of 12 months in Switzerland”. This means in reality there are more than 8.865 million people living in Switzerland, namely additionally the foreign nationals with a short-term residence permit of up to 12 months. In 2022, according to the *NZZ Folio* of July, 91,145 foreigners immigrated into the “non-permanent foreign population” – quite a few of them will probably stay longer. This means that the nine-million-strong Swiss population will soon be a reality. Strangely enough, the Federal Statistical Office does not include this considerable number of short-term immi-

grants in its calculation of immigration. In 2022, 190,500 people immigrated into the “permanent resident population”, 21,900 of them Swiss. After subtracting emigrants, this results in a “net migration” (also called “net immigration”) of 70,100, according to the FSO. However, last year almost 10,000 more Swiss emigrated than immigrated, so that the net immigration of foreigners amounts to almost 80,000 — plus the balance of short-term residents immigrating and emigrating.

– *Refugees and asylum seekers*: 99,470 people came to Switzerland as refugees last year. Of these, about a quarter applied for asylum, 59 % of the applications already decided on were granted, 41 % were rejected. The other three quarters (almost 75,000) were Ukrainians who did not have to apply for asylum but were granted S protection status. Unlike refugees from other countries and continents, they are all allowed to stay here, have the right to work and other privileges. Why not the asylum seekers from elsewhere? Legal equality looks different.

– *Workers*: In 2022, 84,927 people immigrated to the Swiss labor market. 94 % of them come from EU/EFTA countries, that’s almost 80,000. What did the Federal Council say appeasingly in 2000, before the vote on the Bilateral Agreements I? About 8,000 a year would come from the EU to work in Switzerland. Otherwise, we could temporarily pull an emergency valve. Although the Federal Council’s figure proved to be far too low from the start – as realistically thinking citizens had warned before the vote – the emergency valve was never pulled, justified by the guillotine clause that Brussels could use to exclude Switzerland from the single market again. In fact, the EU would be cutting its own flesh, as it is particularly interested in the land transport agreement and the free movement of persons with Switzerland.

### EU law before Swiss law? Example of the Union Citizens’ Directive (UBRL)

The EU Citizenship Directive is a vivid example of how EU law would marginalise Swiss law in many areas if the Federal Council were to enter into negotiations with Brussels again. It extends the right of residence and social assistance of citizens of EU member states and their family members far beyond the rules in the Swiss-EU Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons: permanent right of resi-

dence after five years of residence for EU citizens and their family members (Art. 16), right of residence for social assistance recipients “as long as they do not make unreasonable use of the social assistance benefits of the host member state” (Art. 14), expulsion “only for serious reasons of public policy or public security” (Art. 28).<sup>2</sup>

Let us return to the immigration figures for the year 2022. 84,927 persons, almost all from the EU area, came to Switzerland to work here, 43,026 others immigrated as family members of gainfully employed persons (family reunification), making a total of around 128,000, and the trend is rising. 26 % of the Swiss population are foreigners today. With the adoption of the UBRL, these numbers would certainly continue to grow. Switzerland is a country with very high standards in the areas of social welfare and social insurance as well as low unemployment figures. It is understandable that many employed people and their families are drawn here. But it is also understandable that we Swiss want to limit our immigration to a reasonable level. This was the goal of the mass immigration initiative of 2014, which was approved by the people and is in the Federal Constitution, but according to the command from Brussels was never implemented by the Federal Council and Parliament.

However, the question of whether Switzerland should adopt the EU Citizenship Directive is not only about immigration figures, it is also about the compulsion to adopt EU law. Whether the social welfare receipt of an EU citizen living here is appropriate or inappropriate, or whether a convicted criminal should be expelled or not, would no longer be decided under Swiss law by Swiss courts, but by the *European Court of Justice*. The provision in the Swiss Federal Constitution on the expulsion of convicted criminals (Article 121(3)), which was adopted by the sovereign, would no longer be authoritative.

The Federal Council must not forget in its eagerness to start new negotiations with Brussels: Swiss voters will not allow the rules of the EU Citizenship Directive and other EU law to be imposed on our legal system by the EU Commission and the ECJ. We decide on our law ourselves.

### New negotiations with the EU?

#### A look back two years

Before the Federal Council leans too far out towards Brussels, it would be use-

continued on page 7

# Swiss Neutrality – a “damage to reputation”?

## A barrage on the consequential neutrality policy of Switzerland

*pk* Recently, public statements, even official interference in our internal affairs, have been accumulating in our country, putting pressure on the Swiss Federal Council to participate immediately in the arms deliveries of other countries to Ukraine. His refusal so far is not understood in friendly foreign countries and is thus rejected. This would damage Switzerland's reputation. Such tones are new. Until now, the opposite has been the case both here and abroad: high recognition of Swiss neutrality.

Non-Swiss people of the generation which still have witnessed the horrors of war and not just “know” about them by hearsay, express their gratitude for the fact that, amidst the inferno, there had been a place which did not belong to a belligerent block. This has been confirmed for our history-forgotten time, among others by the article of *Gotthard Frick* (*Snuggling up to NATO will lead Switzerland into the next possible war!*) in *Current Concerns* No 11 of 16 May 2023). Much alleviation of suffering for the people affected was possible as a result. It is true that during this time trains passed through Switzerland with cargoes that served the war. This could not be avoided if the Federal Council wanted to fulfil its other obligation: security for the population. Retouching “pure” neutrality was not kowtowing to Hitler, but arose from the need to feed

the population (with the numerous internees and refugees) and get them through the cold wartime winters. Trains carrying wounded soldiers from the war zones also passed through Switzerland. They were cared for by Swiss volunteers, without regard to their uniform, simply because they were human beings.

In our constitution, the preservation of Switzerland's independence is an unalterable state objective. For neutral Switzerland, this includes consistent non-alignment. The original Swiss insistence on neutrality has preserved the independence of this small country. In times of crisis, the Swiss people showed great solidarity with those in distress – with the people, not with one power bloc or another. Since when should it be dishonourable to stand up for people all over the world? As a host country of the International Red Cross, Switzerland has a special mandate here. We should not forget an important statement made in a recent interview by the President of the Geneva-based *International Committee of the Red Cross* (ICRC). It also touched on the problem that the ICRC can no longer fully perform its basic tasks of alleviating suffering in wars, due to lack of funds (it is financed by voluntary contributions, mainly governmental). The ICRC president said there:

*“Because of our neutrality and independence, we are often the only organisation that can provide aid.”*

*I was in the north-east of Syria and in Russia. Apart from us, no one has access to prisoners there.”*

The President was alluding to the beneficial work of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in its contacts in prison camps in current war theatres around the world. What does it look like for a prisoner of war when he knows that no one in the world cares about him anymore?

Neutrality is a foreign policy orientation. But it is also an attitude, a profoundly anti-war one. As long as it consistently shapes state action, it is taken seriously. But if Geneva, with its UN headquarters and the seat of the ICRC, were to be located in the future in a state that is in fact aligned with a military alliance that receives its orders from NATO headquarters and implements them with zeal, as is actually the case with the EU today, then much damage would result – for Switzerland as well as for humanity, and not only damage to its reputation. The *International Committee of the Red Cross*, which originated in Switzerland and has its headquarters in Switzerland, would then also have to change its emblem, the red cross in a white field. And if Switzerland were still consistent, it would also have to change its flag, the deep red of loyalty to the alliance, even with fellow citizens who speak other languages and think differently, to a very pale Brussels blue. •

### “Record immigration to Switzerland ...”

continued from page 6

ful to remember why it broke off negotiations with the EU in May 2021. Not to make the same mistake again that it wiped out two years ago for good reasons. The EU Citizenship Directive can serve as a reminder. When Federal Councillor *Ignazio Cassis* took over negotiations with the EU on a framework agreement from his predecessor in the *Department of Foreign Affairs* FDFA in 2017, he described the UBRL as a “red line” that was out of the question for Switzerland. However, it soon became clear that the EU understood “dynamic adoption” to mean that Switzerland should adopt all EU law concerning market access agreements on an ongoing basis. This was particularly the case with regard to the free movement of persons. Even though the Federal Council has attempted, among other things, to restrict the application of the EU Citizenship Directive according to our understanding of the law, this could not and cannot succeed. This is because

the EU, following a completely different approach, namely for the purpose of an ever closer political union, “extended the free movement of persons with the adoption of the Union Citizens Directive and linked it to the concept of Union citizenship”, according to the Federal Council in its media release of 26 May 2021. The fact that the EU showed no willingness to take into account Switzerland's completely different understanding of the state, also with regard to the accompanying measures and state aid, was the reason why the Federal Council broke off the negotiations on 26 May 2021.<sup>3</sup>

In retrospect, one must concede that the Federal Council not only rejected the adoption of three selective EU regulations, but at the same time opposed the de facto automatic adoption of EU law and its interpretation by the EU Court of Justice.

This to the Federal Council's notebook. Why not stick to the idea that new negotiations are a wasted effort? Why not stick to the existing bilateral agreements and the 1972 Free Trade Agreement with the EU, for mutual benefit? The secret

“benchmarks” for a new negotiating mandate cannot contain anything really new, and all the hustle and bustle expressed in the media release of 21 June will at best arouse new desires on the part of Brussels. Federal Councillor *Ignazio Cassis* has experienced it enough: the “exceptions and principles for safeguarding Switzerland's essential interests” that he wants to negotiate with Brussels meet with little understanding there. And the numerous talks that his negotiator, State Secretary *Livia Leu*, has held in Brussels have only resulted in her resigning her mandate due to a lack of concessions on the part of the other party. •

<sup>1</sup> “Federal Council approves parameters for EU negotiating mandate”. *Press release* of 21 June 2023

<sup>2</sup> Directive 2004/38/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the right of citizens of the Union and their family members to move and reside freely within the territory of the Member States

<sup>3</sup> Annex to the Federal Council's *press release* of 26 May 2021: Institutional Agreement: Results of the talks between Switzerland and the EU on the clarification points of the Union Citizens' Directive (UBRL), wage protection and state aid

# This is no longer a market economy

## Ideologically motivated attacks on mid-tier business

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



Eberhard Hamer  
(picture ma)

There have always been two opposing economic principles: The principle of the market economy with entrepreneurial freedom and a guarantee for property which should enable and reward decentralised, self-responsible economic

activity and, on the other hand, the centralised administrative economy which centrally directs production and distribution, dictating the economic participants when, what and how much they may produce or consume.

The author had the most dramatic conversation on this topic with the head of China's central planning. After presenting to officials on privatisation and its benefits, he received an invitation to the Central Planning Bureau to discuss the issue. While the starting point for the Chinese was the Party's rule over the economy as well, the author's approach was about economic profitability.

### Experiences in China

On the first day, the author was able to convince the Chinese with hundreds of privatisation calculations by the *Mittelstandsinstitut Hannover* that in principle decentralised production by free entrepreneurs was cheaper by an average of 30 to 40 % – but often more than 100 % – and therefore the population would be better supplied than by a state production by amateur entrepreneurs. The Chinese conceded that private enterprises are generally more cost-oriented, more responsive to the market and more variable in serving consumers than public providers. The author was able to prove to them with international examples that more entrepreneurs meant more and better supply to the population at cheaper costs and prices, while fewer entrepreneurs – i.e., more state supply – meant more expensive, poorer and less demand-responsive supply to consumers.

However, the Chinese economy at that time was mainly determined by large state-owned enterprises, which in turn – as in the GDR – had not only one main production unit, but many small sub-units, up to and including supplying their own employees. The Chinese feared that releasing these large corporations into free-market entrepreneurial freedom would risk a take-

over and domination by international capital. This would reduce the Party's power to issue directives, and the Chinese economy would lose its collective planned economy goals.

### Economic growth and state control

The Chinese had apparently continued their discussions during the night, so that on the second day it was no longer a question of whether free private entrepreneurs in the lower levels (mid-tier) were better than the Party's amateur entrepreneurs, but only of the degree of decentralised entrepreneurial freedom and central control that would achieve the highest economic growth and at the same time still be controllable by the Party.

At breakfast, the author asked the top central planning secretary what decision he had come to during the night. The answer: "The party will not give up the power to steer the economy."

Such discussions also took place after reunification in the former GDR, but against the background that the GDR's administrative-economic system had failed. There were only 180,000 entrepreneurs there, where before communism more than 3 million entrepreneurs and their businesses had created more social product than the Ruhr region. It was therefore indisputable that a market economy system should be re-established in the new federal states as in West Germany:

- with freedom of trade for self-responsible entrepreneurs
- who were to determine their own production or service in terms of type, quantity, and price,
- were allowed to work at their own risk, but also for their own profit.
- and whose private economic success was secured by the property guarantee of the Basic Law.

### Treuhand\* prevented market economy in East Germany

At the time, the author had proposed that half of the "state-owned" enterprises be reserved for their own employees (employee participation) instead of breaking them up, giving them away to international corporations or selling them off in some other way. This might have become the most modern market economy in the world, a development that was prevented by a Treuhand president controlled by international high finance. Thus, although the new German states have some corporate branches, they have an entrepreneurial deficit and therefore a growth deficit,

a deficit of decentralised production and thus jobs and taxes, while the profits of the corporate branches flow westwards all the way across the Atlantic.

However, the fact that the reconstruction in the new federal states has succeeded despite these restrictions is thanks to the 100,000 local and immigrant entrepreneurs who, based on the new freedom of trade and the guarantee of ownership, have created new businesses, productions and goods in the new federal states.

Meanwhile, the difference between the Chinese and the GDR economic development is that in the GDR the administrative economy and thus the state control was enforced to the lowest level and failed. The Chinese leadership, on the other hand, has freed up the lower economic levels by developing a broad middle class and has wisely concentrated on directing large enterprises and central planning. They have been successful with this so far.

### New forced regulation and the "Great Reset"

Until the turn of the millennium, it was scientifically and politically undisputed that, due to the strong middle class developing in it, the market economy was the more efficient economic system compared to an administrative economy. Now the billionaires of the international financial industry, with the help of *Klaus Schwab* in Davos (*World Economic Forum*) and hundreds of NGOs, have not only brought about globalisation but, with the help of financial and political crises as well as panic theories of mass extinction (Corona), extinction of species, climate catastrophe and doomsday scenarios, they have been able to reassert their demand for compulsory state regulation and – as Schwab openly wrote in his book "The Great Reset" – they want to reduce the human population (world epidemics such as Corona), reduce the production of industries they do not control (such as the automobile industry) by forcibly curbing consumption, thus reducing demand, revolutionising our dealing of nature and dictating the supply of consumers according to quantity and type.

For far too long the middle classes have dismissed this ideology of a cultural, civilisational, economic and social revolution, pursued by a global upper class, as "environmental nonsense" and have not taken its missionaries seriously. But since they have now come to power in the USA, Canada, Australia, and Germany and have

continued on page 9



# Economic consequences of a lack of ethics and morals

by Christian Kreiß\*



Christian Kreiß  
(picture ma)

*The times of constant real economic growth in the Western world are over. We are at a secular turning point. Despite ever more inventions and technical progress, despite constantly increasing labour productivity, there will*

*probably be hardly any further real, welfare-enhancing economic growth for the majority of the population in the future. Or we will even see a shrinking of our real prosperity for most of the people of the Western world and many other countries.*

Europe is currently in a rapidly progressing process of bureaucratisation, ossification and surveillance and is struggling with ever-increasing diseases of civilisation. Slowly but surely, the economy is becoming heavier and heavier with ballast, so that at some point it will run out of steam. The phase of ascent is probably over. With a bit of luck, we may be able to maintain the level we have reached for a few more decades.

## Examples

That many countries should be in or facing a phase of real welfare stagnation or even shrinkage may sound very implausible at first glance. Therefore, a few empirical proofs based on countries in which the predicted development has already largely occurred for several years:

Measured in terms of officially reported purchasing power-adjusted gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, there

has been virtually no per capita economic growth in the UK, South Africa, Mexico and Japan for the past 14 years. Brazil has been stagnant for 10 years, and people in Italy are poorer today than 20 years ago, according to government figures.

In Germany, GDP per capita adjusted for purchasing power officially increased by a total of 11.6 percent from 2007 to 2021. That actually does not sound bad. However, a study by the *Hans Böckler Foundation* from 2016 arrives at quite different results for a period somewhat further back in time. The trade union-affiliated researchers contrasted GDP with their own welfare indicator, the *National Welfare Index* (NWI). This supplements GDP with, among other things, distributional components, voluntary employment, and it subtracts harm reduction activities such as costs from crime, environmental pollution, noise pollution, etc.

From 1991 to 2014, real GDP in Germany increased by a total of 34.3 percent. The welfare index NWI, however, only increased by 4.4 percent in the same period. This is a dramatic difference. According to this index, real welfare for the majority of people in Germany hardly increased at all during these 25 years, although real GDP

continued on page 10

## "This is no longer a market economy"

continued from page 8

been able to take over the political switching stations, the green revolution is suddenly becoming reality through forced regulation of our culture (gender), our civilisation (cars, heating), our society (lock-down) and our economy (ecology instead of economy).

### Collective goals and purposes

Internationally – and now, unfortunately, also in Germany – it is no longer about individual freedom, justice, property and prosperity, but about collective goals and purposes such as climate correction, multi-cultural society, species extinction and even the end of the world, which – since they are not in the interest of individual citizens – have to be formulated, regulated and dictated by the central state.

In the past, only those who were professionally trained and knew how to convince could become civil servants or ministers. Since 2021, 10,000 poorly educated people without specialist knowledge have already become civil servants and even educational dropouts have become ministers,

because it is about the implementation of an ideology and no longer about the economic well-being, freedom, and justice for the individual citizen.

Economically, the market economy with individual freedom, self-responsibility, self-reliance, and ownership provided us with 70 years of the highest prosperity ever seen in Germany. Now our government is switching from a market economy back to a central administrative economy, trying to regulate production down to the individual entrepreneurs, to ban production or consumption, to restrict the freedom of our entrepreneurs through more and more specific laws, so that in the meantime bureaucracy is the biggest problem of our small and medium-sized entrepreneurs, the legal property guarantee of the German Basic Law (Art. 14 GG) through economic expropriation (heating dictates, restrictions on the use of agriculture, technical strangulation of the car, energy arbitrariness, etc.).

### What the state does also affects the middle class

For the first time, small and medium-sized businesses are now realising how much of their individual success – which

they usually attribute only to themselves – is due to public data (production conditions) promoting or not promoting the economy. Under the favourable economic conditions of the past decades, even moderate entrepreneurs could be successful. With the new economy-damaging green economic conditions, more than a million even capable entrepreneurs will perish in the mid-term. Even the best entrepreneur has no chance of survival against compulsory regulations, bans and bureaucratic restrictions. Without entrepreneurial freedom of action, without a guarantee of ownership of a profit and under pressure of increasing regulations of conditions foreign to the economy and economic expropriations, economic activities in Germany are not only increasingly unprofitable, but increasingly impossible. The mood in the small and medium size sector has never been as bad as it is at present.

\* The *Treuhandanstalt* ("Trust agency"), colloquially referred to as *Treuhand*, was an agency established by the government of the German Democratic Republic to reprivatise/privatise East German enterprises, *Volkseigene Betriebe* (VEBs), prior to German reunification.

(Translation *Current Concerns*)

### “Economic consequences ...”

continued from page 9

growth of one third was reported. This is an impressive result that raises some questions.

Presumably, the welfare measure developed by the *Hans Böckler Foundation* for Germany between 2007 and 2021 will show real contraction instead of economic growth of 11.6 per cent. The results published by the Trade Union Foundation in 2016 underline the statement made above that we may in fact have long since entered a phase of stagnation in the real growth of prosperity for the majority of the population. Only the official statistics do not let us know.

But people still feel it. Many people wonder, for example, why it is no longer possible for many young families today for only one parent to work to finance the family, why for economic reasons very often both parents have to work, whereas a generation ago, when we were officially much poorer, this was often not necessary.

The six countries mentioned first have thus already been officially in a state of far-reaching economic stagnation or even shrinkage of the actual material standard of living for many years. Germany has probably also been de facto in a phase of stagnation of real well-being for many years. If the method of the *Hans Böckler Foundation's National Welfare Index* were also applied to the six other countries, the results would most likely be much worse than the official GDP figures described above. Presumably, in these six countries, real welfare has been falling for a long time for the majority of the population. If you talk to people from Italy, they usually confirm this vehemently. The same applies to conversations with people from South Africa or Mexico.

### Causes for the end of economic growth

In my view, there are two main drivers that are leading us into decline. One is declining health. Secondly, and probably the main reason, declining ethical and moral standards.

#### 1. Declining Health, Increasing Diseases of Civilisation

If we are getting sicker and sicker, if allergies, neurodermatitis, diabetes, high blood pressure, caries, ADHD, obesity, arthrosis, rheumatism, cancer are already on the increase at a young age, we need more and more health personnel and medicines. This officially increases economic power. An increase in these health services or products increases GDP. In reality, however, there is no increase in wealth or

well-being, on the contrary. One only “repairs” expensively, with a lot of time, energy and pain, trying to regain the state of health that was there before, or at least not let it deteriorate further.

#### 2. Declining standards of morality and ethics

When moral and ethical standards in a country decline, there are serious damaging economic effects. Key factors are trust and reliability. Our economy is highly organised based on the division of labour. Production chains are often very long and stretch across many countries and continents. If one link in the production chain breaks, the whole supply chain no longer functions, as we had to painfully experience during the lockdowns. How do you ensure that supply chains work on a large and small scale, that all parties involved abide by the rules, that delivery deadlines and quality criteria are fulfilled?

The less the people involved in the economic process adhere to ethics and morals, the higher the transaction costs become. This makes the production and distribution of goods and services more expensive. The lower the moral standards, the more cheating takes place. *Cum-Ex* deals, diesel scandal, *Wirecard*, rotten meat, insurance fraud, glycol wine, tax evasion, financial fraud, concealed shortening of product life cycles, etc.: The list of small and large frauds and overreaching in everyday business life is long and constantly growing. In my estimation, white-collar crime, dishonesty and overreaching in business life have been increasing significantly for decades and will continue to increase in absolute and percentage terms.

How does this concretely affect our lives? One example: If crime increases because of declining moral standards, we need more and more police, security and guard personnel, more people to produce surveillance cameras or other security items such as locks, deadbolts, security software, weapons, protection and defence devices or defence items, more lawyers, judges and prisons. Increasing the benefits of these people increases GDP, but not real prosperity. On the contrary. With increasing crime and surveillance, people feel less comfortable than before when crime was non-existent or rare and GDP was lower.

No real improvement in people's lives comes from such an increase in GDP. One only “repairs”, one tries to restore the state of security and trust that existed before the rise in crime, or at least not to let it deteriorate further. In economics, these kinds of goods are also called “regrettables”.

So, if you want to maintain production despite declining moral standards, you need ever stricter rules, controls, bureaucracy and enforcement instruments or personnel such as supervisors, surveillance cameras, controlling, lawyers, courts and police. All this leads to rising production costs. The lower the ethical standards, the more expensive it becomes to produce, the more resources, capital, human spirit, energy and vitality have to be put into administration, control, surveillance and bureaucracy instead of productive activities.

In short: the more egoism prevails in economic life and in society in general, the more difficult and unproductive the production of goods and services becomes. What will happen to Europe in the medium term if moral standards continue to fall can be well studied in the Mafia in Sicily or in some slums in South America. When core elements of morality and decency are really destroyed, mafia systems and other organised criminal gangs can flourish. In some favelas in South America, only the law of the strongest counts, pure egoism or, what is perhaps even worse, group egoism, gang egoism prevails. In Rio de Janeiro, for example, about a quarter of the area or a good two million people are under the control of such gang structures. Then there is a system of fear and extortion.

Apart from the social and psychological devastation that such frightening structures bring, this wipes out all kinds of sensible economic activity. Under such conditions, economic life can only produce what is necessary for survival. Growth or even prosperity is no longer conceivable under such circumstances. The more our society develops in such a direction from a moral point of view, the more prosperity will decline.

It is a big mistake to believe that one can compensate for declining ethical standards, which lie within human beings, through external strict laws, rules of the game and their enforcement by means of external pressure. It is precisely the enforcement of rules through external pressure, with threats of punishment, etc., that leads to the increasing control, monitoring and bureaucracy described above, which does not create prosperity, but only sucks up more and more resources unproductively.

If Europe goes downhill in moral terms, the real standard of living for the majority of people will also go down. As we are on this path in Europe, in my estimation, our welfare will experience a decline instead of an ascent in the coming decades. •

# Ellsberg and “The process of my awakening”

by Patrick Lawrence\*



Patrick Lawrence  
(picture ef)

*Ellsberg could never have gotten the Pentagon Papers published had he not first done something far larger, if he had not changed his life – the way he lived it and what he did with it.*

Of all the fine things written and said about *Daniel Ellsberg* since his death June 16, there is a thread running through them we ought not miss, a story Ellsberg himself told better than anyone else. It is a story from which we can all learn.

As we consider this story, we can embrace Ellsberg as an exemplar as much as he was a courageous man of conscience. As he put it in an interview some years ago, “courage is contagious.”

Ellsberg did not give the story I have in mind a name, a title, a headline, or any such designation, but he may as well have, and I take the liberty of drawing from his words to name it now, the process of Dan Ellsberg’s awakening.

## Meeting Gary Snyder

In 1970, a year and maybe less before Ellsberg gave the Pentagon Papers to “The New York Times”, “The Washington Post” and “The Boston Globe”, he traveled to Nevada City, California, a small burg 150 miles north of and inland from San Francisco, and knocked on the door of the house wherein dwelt *Gary Snyder*, one of the brightest lights among the Beat poets.

We can confidently infer that Ellsberg had the still-secret Pentagon Papers in his car, as he wrote the following in “The First Two Times We Met,” an essay that appeared in a collective celebration of Snyder’s life and work called *Dimensions of a Life* (Sierra Club Books, 1991):

“I didn’t show him any papers from the trunk, so as not to implicate him; but I hinted that he was implicated anyway, in the process of my awakening. I wanted to thank him.”

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Let us consider the scene. How far did Ellsberg drive that day to knock unannounced on a noted poet’s door simply to say thank you? Thank you for what? What had Snyder done, and when, that was worthy of such gratitude?

As Ellsberg told the story on various occasions, he had met Snyder in Kyoto in 1960 – the first of the two times mentioned in his essay.

Snyder was then halfway through a decade-long study of Zen Buddhism under the tutelage of *Oda Sesso Roshi*. Ellsberg was living in Tokyo at the time, developing policies concerning the use of nuclear weapons for the *Office of Naval Research*.

As Ellsberg recounted the meeting, the two met by chance at a bar near *Ryoanji*, the Zen monastery famous for its garden. He had by then read of it in “The Dharma Bums”, the *Jack Kerouac* novel, and, so inspired, had traveled to Kyoto more or less as a tourist.

Among the speakers that evening was an antiwar activist named *Randy Kehler*, who was then on his way to prison, without so much as a flinch, for turning in his draft card and refusing all cooperation with the *Selective Service System*.

Parenthetically, Kehler had his life hanging on the line long after serving his prison term, which ran most of two years. After he long refused to pay taxes to protest the Pentagon’s budget, in 1989 the federal government seized the Kehlert’s house in Colrain, a small town in northern Massachusetts. It was *Chris Appy*, the UMass historian of the Vietnam War, who related this story to me many years after the fact.

## A Sudden Conversion

That evening at Haverford had much to do with Ellsberg’s subsequent decision to copy the Pentagon Papers and, two years later, do with them what we all know he

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“No illusions here: Most of us prefer the irresponsibility of slumber. But for those who so choose, we can allow ourselves to awaken. We can accept the burdens knowledge always brings with it, just as Dan Ellsberg showed us in his own life.”

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Imagine reading Kerouac, training to a place he writes of, and there meeting one of the novelist’s close friends. In the accounts I have read, the Vietnam War was a major topic of conversation. Ellsberg was still a dedicated supporter; Snyder, who by this time had the sturdy composure of the monks under whom he studied, talked of it from the other side.

They liked one another, a little improbably from our perspective. They had lunch together the next day, continuing the conversation begun the previous evening.

A decade later Ellsberg identified the encounter with Snyder with his “awakening.” And so the defense technocrat drove a long way, we have to assume, to thank the poet. There is something in this to love.

## Anti-War Meeting 1969

Nine years after the Kyoto meeting and a year before the Nevada City reunion — we are now in August 1969 — Ellsberg attended a gathering sponsored by the *War Resisters’ League*. (The good old WRL.) This was at *Haverford College*. You have to figure Ellsberg was by this time at some stage in the process of his awakening: Why would he be there otherwise?

did. Ellsberg recounted his experience to *Marlo Thomas* many years later.

“I left the auditorium and found a deserted men’s room,” he told the actress and sometime activist. “I sat on the floor and cried for over an hour, just sobbing. The only time in my life I’ve reacted to something like that.”

Let us ask at this point who was crying on the men’s room floor at Haverford, that we can understand the moment for what it was. Was it the eager Marine Ellsberg had been, the RAND war planner, the technocrat who toured the carnage in Vietnam, the Defense Department analyst?

Or was it the person Ellsberg had just then become, mourning all that he had been and all that he had done until that moment — the Marine and the analyst having that very evening died?

Ellsberg’s account of that evening brings to mind *Saul* on his way to Damascus as related in *Acts 9*. There was a fall in each case and then an *epiphany*, a sudden conversion. Everything thereupon changed in each case. Saul became *Paul*, and, whatever you may think of him, St. Paul altered the course of Western civilization. Ellsberg, perfectly fair to say,

continued on page 12

## Daniel Ellsberg and the Pentagon Papers

ef. Daniel Ellsberg was born in Chicago on 17 April 1931 and grew up in Detroit. He studied economics at Harvard University (1952) and at *King's College*, Cambridge University. From 1954 to 1957 he served in the US Marines as an officer. From 1957 to 1959 he was a Fellow at Harvard, where he received his Ph.D. in 1962 with a dissertation on "Risk, Ambiguity and Decision".

In 1959, he took a position as an analyst with the RAND Corporation, working on behalf of the Pentagon. From 1964, Ellsberg worked under Secretary of Defence *Robert McNamara* at the Pentagon.

From 1965 to 1967, Ellsberg spent two years in Vietnam. It was there that he realised that the Vietnam War was unwinnable for the US. Almost everyone in the Pentagon knew this; however, for career-related and political reasons, no one wanted to admit it publicly. McNamara's staff declared, against their better judgement, in official releases to the press that the Vietnam War would pass quickly and without major losses, respectively that the USA and its ally South Vietnam would be victorious.

In 1967, Ellsberg moved back to the RAND Corporation. During this time, he had access to classified material at the Pentagon's highest level of secrecy. The documents, commissioned through the Pentagon, proved US involvement in "dirty tricks" and illegal actions since 1945 under the presidencies of *Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson* and *Nixon*. They proved that successive US presidents had lied to the American people and that, contrary to what was publicly stated, the US had been involved in the Indochina War and later the Vietnam War since 1945. They had organised false flag operations, spread "fake news" and issued fabricated stories by the respective defence secretaries.

In June 1971, at the height of the Vietnam War, Daniel Ellsberg sent the "Pen-



*Daniel Ellsberg at a press conference in New York 1972. (picture Bernard Godfryd, WikiCommons)*

tagon Papers" to the "New York Times" and the "Washington Post", among others. He had previously copied 47 folders with a total of 7,000 pages of confidential records. After three published episodes from the "Papers" in the New York Times, Nixon had further newspaper reports banned by an injunction. Ellsberg gave the documents to 18 other newspapers. These were also banned from publication. For the first time in the history of the United States, the government had succeeded in stopping the reporting of a newspaper by court order. On 30 June 1971, the US Supreme Court issued a landmark ruling overturning the publication bans as unconstitutional.

Two days before the ruling, on 28 June 1971, Daniel Ellsberg surrendered to federal authorities at the US Attorney's office in Boston: "I felt that as an American citizen, as a responsible citizen, I could no longer cooperate in con-

cealing this information from the American public. I did this clearly at my own jeopardy and I am prepared to answer to all the consequences of this decision."

Ellsberg was accused of espionage, theft and conspiracy under the *Espionage Act* of 1871 (the same one under which *Julian Assange* is charged), which could have meant 115 years in prison. Nixon's then National Security Advisor *Henry Kissinger* called Ellsberg "the most dangerous man in America".

His trial took place in 1973. Ellsberg's lawyer succeeded in proving that the government had conducted illegal wire-taps and that the prosecution had withheld crucial evidence from the defence. The trial lasted four months and ended with the dismissal of all charges. Ellsberg became the most famous whistle-blower in US history.

The Pentagon Papers were not least of all the reason for the amendment of the "Freedom of Information Act", which allows civilians to inspect US government documents upon request.

After the publishing of the Pentagon Papers, Ellsberg continued to be politically active against wars. To the end, he lectured worldwide, including on the US government's actions in Iraq, and he has published numerous books.

He was a staunch supporter of the whistleblower platform *WikiLeaks*. Several times he visited Julian Assange in his former asylum in the Ecuadorian embassy in London.

In March 2023, Daniel Ellsberg announced that he had been diagnosed with inoperable pancreatic cancer and was estimated to have only three to six months to live; he did so with great thankfulness to his friends and acquaintances. However, he continued to make himself available for interviews, talks and lectures. Daniel Ellsberg passed away on 16 June 2023 at the age of 92.

### "Ellsberg and ..."

continued from page 11

spent the rest of his life attempting to do the same.

#### Being in charge of your own life

I go back now to something Ellsberg said in that brief essay he contributed to the book Gary Snyder's friends put together to honor him. What most affected him when he first met the poet was what he intuited: He saw someone "who was in charge of his own life, a model of the way a life could be lived."

This comment is key, it seems to me. It explains why Ellsberg made the long drive to Nevada City a decade later. And it tells us what later happened to Ellsberg in the fullest sense. When we think of Ells-

berg's presence in the public sphere, we conclude that getting the Pentagon Papers published was the most important thing he ever did.

But he could never have done that, we must not miss, if he had not first done something far larger: If he had not changed his life – the way he lived it and what he did with it.

If he had not, in other words, completed the awakening, his chance encounter with a Beat poet did much to set in motion. This, "the process of my awakening," is the very truest story Ellsberg has to tell us and the one from which we can learn the most.

As in St. Paul's story, coming awake was the wellspring from which flowed everything Ellsberg did after, figurative-ly speaking, he fell from his horse on the

road to his Damascus. It was his awakening – in essence to the difference between truths and lies – that enabled him to consider the prospect of life in prison with a remarkable aplomb, even equanimity.

#### No turning back

He knew, by the time he faced that prospect, that there was no turning back. You don't get to go back to sleep once you come awake. *Aeschylus* famously put it this way:

*He who learns must suffer.  
And even in our sleep,  
pain that cannot forget  
falls drop by drop  
upon the heart,*

continued on page 13

**"Ellsberg and ..."**

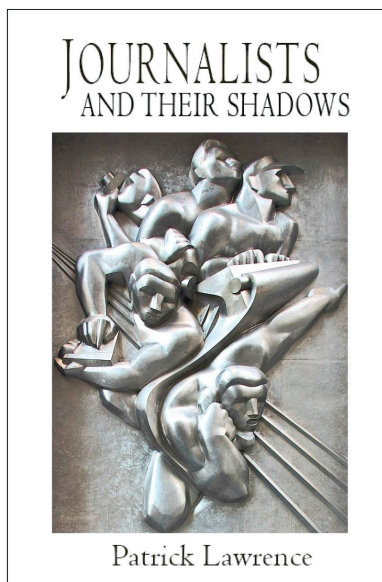
continued from page 12

*and in our own despair,  
against our will,  
comes wisdom to us  
by the awful grace of God.*

Aeschylus

Ellsberg understood this, surely. He was well aware that to come awake means to suffer and of his own need to be pulled along by others as he made his way toward the state of wakefulness. From a 2006 interview:

*"I'd like peoples' consciences to be rethought and reshaped as much as possible ... Learning from people who have already had that conversion is very helpful. In my case it was crucial for me to meet people who were of that mind and who were going to prison rather than take part at all in what they saw as a wrongful war. ... Courage is contagious, and coming into contact or*



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“When we think of Ellsberg’s presence in the public sphere, we conclude that getting the Pentagon Papers published was the most important thing he ever did. But he could never have done that, we must not miss, if he had not first done something far larger: If he had not changed his life – the way he lived it and what he did with it.”

*exposing yourself to people who are taking those risks is very helpful as a first step toward doing it yourself.”*

“As a first step toward doing it yourself.” Brilliant. It is what Ellsberg had most to offer us, what we can learn from him and put most directly to use in our own lives. Ellsberg’s story, the one he told in recounting the incidents noted here – Kyoto, Nevada City, Haverford – is in part one of surrender.

He had to give up the eager Marine and the accomplished war planner. This meant giving up altogether a worldview. It left him weeping on a men’s room floor.

But his story is also one of embrace, of transcendence, of self-mastery, of living “a life that could be lived.”

Ellsberg’s first wakeful act was to rip the veil from the pointless savagery of the Vietnam adventure. Few of us will ever have occasion to do anything of remotely comparable magnitude. But each of us, providing we each summon the courage, can act as truly, as faithfully, as loyally to the human cause as Ellsberg did.

No illusions here: Most of us prefer the irresponsibility of slumber. But for those who so choose, we can allow ourselves to awaken. We can accept the burdens knowledge always brings with it, just as Dan Ellsberg showed us in his own life. •

Source: <https://scheerpost.com/2023/06/27/patrick-lawrence-ellsberg-and-the-process-of-my-awakening/> and <https://thescrum.substack.com> of 1 July 2023

“I’d like peoples’ consciences to be rethought and reshaped as much as possible ... Learning from people who have already had that conversion is very helpful. In my case it was crucial for me to meet people who were of that mind and who were going to prison rather than take part at all in what they saw as a wrongful war. ... Courage is contagious, and coming into contact or exposing yourself to people who are taking those risks is very helpful as a first step toward doing it yourself.” (*Daniel Ellsberg*)

## Not only Federal Councillor Cassis should know this Selenski sells off Ukraine to the West

*ds. Irish MEP Mick Wallace pointed out the blatant exploitation of Ukraine by Ukrainian oligarchs and Western corporations at a meeting in the EU Parliament in June. He said:*

“The damage to Ukraine is devastating. Towns and cities that endured for hundreds of years do not exist anymore. We must recognise that these towns, cities and surrounding lands were long being stolen by local oligarchs colluding with global finan-

cial capital. This theft quickened with the onset of the war in 2014. The pro-Western government opened the doors wide for massive structural adjustment and privatisation programs spearheaded by the *European Bank for Reconstruction and Development*, the *IMF* and the *World Bank*. *Zelenskyy* used the current war to concentrate power and accelerate the carpet fire sale. He banned opposition parties that were resisting deeply unpopular reforms to

the laws restricting the sale of land to foreign investors. Over 3 million hectares of agricultural land are now owned by companies based in Western tax havens. Ukraine’s mineral deposits alone are worth over USD 12 trillion. Western companies are licking their lips. What are the working class people there dying for?” •

Source: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2023-06-13-INT-2-053-0000\\_EN.html](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2023-06-13-INT-2-053-0000_EN.html)

## “It is not the happy who are grateful. It is the grateful who are happy.”

by Moritz Nestor

zf. On the occasion of the General Assembly of the Swiss Hippocratic Society on 29 June 2023 in Zurich, the public was invited to a panel discussion dealing with the understanding of the medical and nursing professions. The following text is the abridged version of the author's contribution.

What is the value of the medical and nursing professions? I would like to illustrate this with the example of my father – namely, his gratitude to the nurse who nursed him back to health for long, long months in the military hospital in Görlitz in 1943. He also passed on to me his gratitude that his life could be saved at that time. I found a word by Sir Francis Bacon (1561–1626) that fits well with this: “It is not the happy who are grateful. It is the grateful who are happy.” Modern man is puzzled. He would have said it the other way round. It often seems to me that we today have almost forgotten what it actually means to be grateful.

In 1943, after more than three thousand kilometres of transporting the wounded, my father arrived barely alive at the reserve military hospital in Görlitz, where he lay for more than half a year until his headshot and frostbite had healed. There he also received the death notice of his beloved friend *Otto*, “Fallen in the East”. They had been twenty radiant high school graduates in 1935. In 1945, ten were still alive.

In the only surviving photo from the time in the military hospital, my beaming grandfather and Sister *Hilde*, the nurse who nursed my father back to health, are standing at the head of the sickbed. The Görlitz site priest *Heuser* visited him repeatedly and gave him a small *New Testament* that fit into his uniform's breast pocket. Father had it re-bound in 1974, as he noted, because it soon fell apart from so much reading, especially those verses about resisting the “works of Satan”. My parents, sister *Hilde* and the priest carried my father through that difficult time spiritually in the truest sense of the word.

My father had been brought up in great gratitude towards his parents and the old people from whom the children get everything they need to live. Under the Nazis, he had become a typical youthful know-it-



In the military hospital in Görlitz, Pentecost 1943. (picture made)

all who now liked to rub the “new times” under “old people's” noses.

With unrelenting force, in a cauldron northwest of Stalingrad on 6 January 1943, a Russian shell in a terrible instant turned a proud first lieutenant into nothing. When he awoke from his swoon and gradually understood that there was something that could simply destroy you, he was overcome with shame, for the first thing he remembered was an old cobbler whom he had accosted some ten years earlier as a fresh-faced SA youth: “Dude, there was no *Jesus*.” The old man replied to him then, smiling sheepishly, “Young man! Watch out, one day God will touch you just like that with his little finger, and then you'll lie there and you'll realise it's God.” But father only thought, “You stupid cobbler!” How one thinks at eighteen. He had thoroughly forgotten the old cobbler. Now he thought of him again, ashamed, for he had learned the divine commandment that one should honour old age. “*Perhaps I will get home safely, he has touched me; now I know that God exists,*” he stammered. He was driven home, as helpless as a small child, through the snowy desert of the Russian winter retreat, on a horse-drawn sleigh, in an ambulance, in a freight wagon, three thousand kilometres and more.

The shame turned father into a repentant sinner who began to rise from the entanglements of life, to work his way up

out of the swamp, and who sought the strength to throw it all behind him. In 1948 he wrote to his new love, my future mother: “*I once wanted to storm the heaven of glory. Now I smile at the vain little fool in me and i am happy when it is granted to me to occupy a small hill, to build my house there and to work downwards from there by looking upwards and orienting myself from there.*” So he got to know some of the good and bad sides of life better than the self-righteous.

How my father found her again after the cursed end of the cursed war, I don't know. But as long as Sister *Hilde* lived, she came regularly to visit us in the family, at the end with white hair and a crooked back, and father always held his relationship with her in high esteem, was grateful to her – all his life long. When he began teaching mathematics and physics after the war, Sister *Hilde* came to him in the classes at his request and told the astonished children how he had come to her in the department in 1943, battered and half dead.

In her presence, he, who was quick to flare up, was another. He called her warmly “Sister *Hilde*” and she always greeted him harshly and cordially: “How are you, Nestor?” When she died at the age of over eighty, she left behind a black cane with a silver crutch, which she had walked with for the last few years and which she held in memory of her father. She had been his sister in his most difficult time.

For almost thirty years, until the end of Sister *Hilde*'s life in the early seventies, the former nurse from the Görlitz military hospital in 1943, who gave him her help at that time, remained connected to

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“In a grateful attitude we do not see a fellow human being who gives us something as a means to an end, but we feel how warming and life-giving a worthy – because pure human relationship – is which is given to us voluntarily.”

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### “It is not the happy ...”

continued from page 14

the first lieutenant, who had been gifted in his “mattress tomb”, by an invisible and unwritten contract. And this happened of one’s own free will. For one can only be truly grateful voluntarily. The contract between the two was the loyalty that comes from such human bonds.

They were never on a first-name base (the German “Du”), used always the formal form to address (the German “Sie”). But in their deep mutual respect they touched the human in a fundamental way that makes healing and caring professions infinite, more than a first-name base ever could. He was forever grateful to her. As long as she lived and beyond her death – until he also died in 1980. Nearly half a century this bond of loyalty persisted.

I said “infinite”. There are some jobs that come and go with popularity. But the healing and caring professions are perpetual. Infinite. Because it’s an eternal destiny that humans become ill, that we suffer mentally and need help. Healing and caring therefore does not come and go again – so like the peoples and the cultures in the history of humankind did.

One time “nurse” was an honorary title for the indispensable charitable dimension of nursing care. Everybody is able to empty a jerry or to bring the food. But

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### “To become a fellow sufferer”

“The highest deed that the doctor succeeds in doing here and there is to become a fellow sufferer, reason with reason, man with man, in the incalculable borderline cases of a friendship developing between doctor and patient. [...] Then one may ask whether the medical personality does not itself become a healing force in a legitimate way, without having to be a magician or a saviour, without suggestion, without any other deception. The presence of a person with the will to help, who is there for the sick person for

a moment, is not only immensely beneficial. The presence of a reasonable person with the power of the spirit and the convincing effect of an unconditionally kind person awakens in others, and thus also in the sick person, incalculable powers of trust, of wanting to live, of truthfulness, without a word being spoken about it. What man can be to man is not exhausted in comprehensibility.”

Karl Jaspers, in: *Lindenberg, Wladimir. Schicksalsgefährte sein (Being a fellow sufferer)*, Munich 1985, p. 14 (Translation *Current Concerns*)

nursing is more than that. Nursing is not a technique. You cannot foster more efficient, faster, or more streamlined. You cannot program caregiving. And where they still try, they create suffering.

In all high cultures, it was part of the special and unique dignity of women that they could give life. It was part of that dignity that women became “Sisters” (German: “Krankenschwester”) to the sick. To nurses. Why, at the end of the 19th century, in the wars fought by men, did women begin to rescue and care for the sick and wounded in the service of life? The fact that women served as Sisters not for war but for life was the human light on the faces of their suffering husbands and gave them a bit of hope: there is something more than killing. Just like Sister Hilde in 1943.

The *spirit of gratitude* that blossomed in my father again when his life was saved in 1943 rekindled that “*peculiar warmth of human connection that springs from the awareness of one’s obligation*” (Bollnow<sup>1</sup>, p. 130). A warmth of the heart that, like the first little spring plants, melted through the snow and ice spread over the heart by the National Socialism. Gratitude – like my father’s towards Sister Hilde – differs from all other forms of giving and taking in that “*performance is not exchanged directly for performance, but in a form that cannot be foreseen and therefore cannot be regulated in a contractual manner an act given voluntarily and without any claim to a service in return creates in the other person the willingness to respond in future cases with a service that is voluntary and not to be obtained through any contractual compulsion. The special dignity of the human relationship characterized by gratitude lies precisely in this voluntary manner, which goes beyond all spoken and unspoken agreements.*” (Bollnow, p. 130)

In a grateful attitude we do not see a fellow human being who gives us something as a means to an end, but we feel how warming and life-giving a worthy – because pure human relationship – is which is given to us *voluntarily* and *which towers every rational expediency of a business*. Because being there for one another is a gift “*that one receives unde-*

*servedly. This distinguishes the gift from what one acquires through merit or buys through payment or even through brute force.*” (Bollnow, p.131)

Is not – like that Schwester Hilde – every doctor in some way also always a giver? He gives *himself* and *his* skills. Does he always know? It is nature that heals. But *he* can do something and *knows* something and can apply it, in this one individual case here, and he can – we hope – avoid damage and reawaken life forces so that nature can unfold its healing powers again. But *he* is always the most important. It begins with his sympathetic question: “*How are you? What’s wrong with you?*” And it ends with the deep, warm look of a reawakened person from his pillow: “*Thank you, Doctor, for seeing me as a whole person and not just as a broken organ.*”

You cannot ask for a gift. It comes to you without having “made any advance payments”. The mature adult knows “*that man is basically never able to live by his own efforts, that the best must always be given to him.*” (Bollnow, p. 136f.) Before we humans can live independently, we are completely created by our culture during a long period of childhood and adolescence, in the person of our parents and teachers, through whom we receive the culture and its wealth as a gift. But the first gift of our life is the love of the mother. Without the child making any advance payments, which would seem absurd to us, she *gives* her love to the new life. *This love knows no compulsion*. And the newborn actively striving for human relationship begins to recognize itself in the mother’s love: I am loved, therefore I am important. And thankfully it stretches out its little arms to this source. The growing childlike self (the “I”) climbs gratefully up to the grown-up counterpart (the “you”) and grows. This love for the mother is the starting point of all ethics – also that of the healing and caring professions, of medicine. If you take away this ethical reason, you also take away its task – and it withers into “*medicine without humanity*”. •

<sup>1</sup> Bollnow, Otto Friedrich. *Neue Geborgenheit. Das Problem einer Überwindung des Existentialismus*. (A New Concealment. The problem of overcoming existentialism), Stuttgart 1955