

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*

History is kicked aside in preparation for next catastrophe

by Willy Wimmer, former State Secretary in the German Ministry of Defence



Willy Wimmer
(picture uk)

In Crimea the mortal remains of German soldiers are often found. They cannot be buried in the beautiful, almost celestially German military cemetery near the port city of Sevastopol, because the responsible German authorities refuse to cooperate with the Russian authorities. If you address this matter to the President of the Federal Republic, an answer will not be given. What is one to think of an administration that due to the current NATO policy behaves in this fashion towards its fallen soldiers?

Are the reminders falling onto deaf ears?

It is an act of decency and responsibility for the past and future to commemorate the dead. We have seen too many of such occasions in the last century. None of this should be forgotten, because this creates new misery. Isn't that especially applicable to Stalingrad and the immeasurable death toll that people beyond Brest paid for the German Reich's attack on the then Soviet Union? Why were the million victims of this war seventy-five years after the end of the Stalingrad battle not commemorated? Why does the Federal Government refuse to honour the victims? Why do we let ourselves be manipulated against Russia by a mendacious and aggressive policy? This policy comes precisely from those alleged allies who wanted to destroy both Germany and the Danube Monarchy in 1914 in the war against Austria-Hungary and imperial Germany!

Why are all in Europe again talking about war against Russia, instead of finally realizing that it was Moscow which placed the key to Germany's unity in our trustworthy hands? Should it be avoided in any case, that the huge and almost unbridgeable difference between the suffering of millions of people beyond Brest and our policies today regarding this country will be visible? Russia and its people are responding to what has been done to their country and to them with a sincere de-

sire for good neighbourliness. Where, in God's name, has there ever been such an attitude?

Berlin reacts as if it is not interested in this attitude. In this regard Berlin is so different from Bonn. Why do we not enforce that only the "Charter of Paris" of November 1990, created a few weeks after the German reunification, remains the defining document of European cooperation? War should be banned from Europe after the horrors of the past century. It was *Bill Clinton* as American President and his Foreign Minister, *Ms Albright*, who restored the old European order of war with the vulgar war of aggression against Yugoslavia.

We have to refuse war

It is precisely the sequence of historically significant data that highlights the dimension of aggressive action against other states and peoples. We see this in the period between 8 January 1918 and June 1919, between the notorious "14 points" of American President *Wilson*, the ceasefire in November 1918, and the Treaty of Versailles. Great Britain and France planned to destroy imperial Germany and Austria-Hungary. These days, in January 2018, the current British Commander-in-Chief [see also article on page 3 above] publicly blustered that one wanted to strike against the so-called Central Powers in 1912 (and not only in 1914). The complete annihilation of Germany was not possible. Ultimately Versailles was necessary to infiltrate the once flourishing pre-war Germany with the plague, so that that the military goal of destroying Germany from the inside could be set in motion.

These disgusting forces could be released in Germany only via Versailles. It is this sequence which must give every political observer the impression that in order to achieve global strategic goals, this mechanism should be started today against the Russian Federation and the state leadership in Moscow. It hit us all "out of the blue" what *Obama* and *Ms Clinton* set in motion towards our Russian neighbours at the beginning of this decade. The deployment of troops and the deadly military antics of the Cold War are nothing against it.

American generals are once again chattering about the great war in Europe. One hardly believes it and considers it against the background of today's politics for a fairy tale, that in summer 2012 the staff music corps of the German army could still play on Red Square in Moscow. More reaching out from Russia isn't possible. And what was the German answer? German government members were actively involved in the Kiev coup and it was used against Moscow. Should Russia be knocked down by the model 1914 in order to be able to destroy it from within? We have a question: Die for Washington? This is by no means directed against the current American President *Trump*. While every American president seems to want to "wage his war," President Trump has not been conspicuous when it comes to combat. However, it is questionable whether his sphere of influence extends beyond the "rose garden" at the White House, or that under the military leadership in the White House the global American military commanders have long since taken the law of action into their own hands. Only one thing does not seem to work: in the Cold War, the Soviet Union was armed to death. Today, this strategy does not seem to work. Probably the "two-percent fetishists" will prevail.¹

¹ Willy Wimmer points to the goal of the NATO states to spend two per cent of GDP on the defence budget. (Editor's note)



ISBN 978-3-94300-712-1

US-American demands: Germany should also take military lead

km. On 6 February 2018, the "Süd-deutsche Zeitung" published a lengthy contribution by *James D. Bindenagel*. James D. Bindenagel is an American political scientist who, in 1996 and 1997, was US Ambassador to Germany and interim in Bonn. Bindenagel is member of numerous influential organisations, including the *American Jewish Committee* in Berlin, the *American Council on Germany* and the *German Council for Foreign Affairs*.

In 2014, Bindenagel was appointed to the new Chair of International Relations and International Law at the University of Bonn. This endowed professorship was established in honour (!) of former US Secretary of State *Henry Kissinger* and is jointly funded by the Federal Ministry of Defence and the Federal Foreign Office. Bindenagel has received numerous awards, including the State Department's *Distinguished Service Award*, the *German Federal Cross of Merit* and the *US Presidential Meritorious Service Award*.

His article in the "Süddeutsche Zeitung" is titled "New World Order" and subtitled "The USA has given up its leading role, now Germany must take more responsibility." Right from the start it is said: "Germany is the greatest hope when it comes to defending the liberal world order – whether the country wants to take the lead or not. Global power is currently shifting: because of growing nationalism in China and Russia, the international order is dissolving. [...] The newly elected American president, in turn, has doubted the US's defence obligation towards Europe. With his nationalist policy, *Donald Trump*

gives up America's leading role in international affairs."

Bindenagel refers to surveys which are supposed to show that a majority believe Germany should no longer rely on the United States for its "defence policy" but should act together with other EU member states. He adds that, according to a survey by the US American *Gallup Institute*, "41 per cent of the respondents have supported a global leading role of Germany – more than for the United States."

Bindenagel is aware of the German's reservations regarding a leading military-political role of their country. He therefore addresses German history. In some black and white picture he draws a militaristic Germany until 1945 and a rather pacifist Germany after the Second World War until 1990. Germany has become a "civil power" – "Europe's leading democracy" (!). He continues: "After the historical shift from one extreme to another [!], the question remains whether the balance between war and peace can now be found." In a nutshell: Germany should declare its willingness to wage war again.

Bindenagel quotes the German voices that have campaigned for German participation in wars, especially at the 2014 Munich Security Conference, but also afterwards: the former Federal President *Gauk*, the former Foreign Minister *Steinmeier*, but also current Foreign Minister *Gabriel* and especially Chancellor *Merkel*.

However, Bindenagel does not call for a German unilateral initiative, but everything should take place within the framework of a EU military force and

within the framework of NATO. Here, Germany, an interesting paradox, is supposed to "lead as a partner". No German "Sonderweg" anymore. It is no coincidence that he strives for voices such as those of *Jürgen Habermas* or the former Polish Foreign Minister *Sikorski*. Habermas stands for the German U. S. orientated "New Left", Sikorski for the first war victim of the *Hitler* dictatorship. In addition, the "German culture of remembrance" will ensure that there is no "excess of German leadership". In other words, even as a leading power, Germany should not be "sovereign".

Bindenagel concludes: "Germany is now called upon to lead Europe. For this to succeed, the country needs a bold, strategic vision [...]". It is of crucial significance to "overcome the inconsistencies in security policy between the political elites and the general public". [Emphasis by the editors] He concludes with the sentence: "The world now wants to know whether Germany appears when it comes to leadership."

"Die Deutschen müssen das Töten lernen" (Germans must learn to kill), was already stated in 2006 on a title of the news magazine "*Der Spiegel*", when the German victims increased in Afghanistan and resistance grew among the German population to this war. The "flute tones" of the US-American James D. Bindenagel belong to this line. The German public has a right to know what the German government has committed to, as a few days after the election victory of *Donald Trump* *Barack Obama* came to Germany and took *Angela Merkel's* oath.

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It's about our dignity

Fundamentals of the stock market and preparation for war

by Karl Müller

The sharp drop in prices on the New York Stock Exchange and subsequently at other major investment houses in the world has given rise to speculation. Right up to the mainstream it was discussed whether the predicted “crash” is emerging. To give an answer to this question is probably not possible right now. However, it becomes clear what everyone actually knows: The speculation with foreign money and the all-pervasive policy of cheap money by the central banks (and governments) have created a huge bubble of securities that no longer corresponds to the reality of the economic performance of companies but “makes the rich ever richer”. This cannot work. These crows are probably pecking out each other's eyes. In 1929 and in 2008, however, it hit millions of innocent people around the world. Others, in turn, deliberately brought about these “crashes”, benefited from them and had far-reaching plans. There is even an exciting German motion picture from the 60s: “The Black Friday” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vgmfcnc4C8c>).

An image from mathematics

In the study of mathematics there is a vivid picture of the difference between real and complex numbers. The real numbers are scattered dots on a sheet of paper which seem incoherent to the observer. But if we look at the points for the real numbers on the lines of the complex numbers (where those are the subset), it turns out that the real numbers are points of a picture that has clear contours. Similarly, it may seem to us today when only considering the many crude events one by one. At first glance, it is like a confusion. Many headlines make no sense, they rather create feelings of powerlessness. What does the overall picture look like?

War propaganda of the British Chief of the General Staff

On 22 January 2018, the British Chief of the General Staff Sir *Nicholas Carter* held a speech at the *British Royal United Services Institute*. The British Chief of the General Staff assumes that today's Russian leaders think and act like the Russians before the First World War or the Japanese before 1941, thus preparing a war of aggression because they were in decline and saw the “solution” in a war alone.

Such a war could come sooner than expected. The Russian attack, however, would be different than previously thought. “It will start with something we don't expect.” Just like in 1946 *George F.*

Germany rearming against Russia

km. On 8 February 2018, the *German Press Agency* (dpa) announced that the German Armed Forces is almost certain to install a new NATO planning and control center designed to accelerate troop and equipment transport around the continent as part of the rearmament of NATO. The offer, made by German Defense Minister *Ursula von der Leyen* (CDU), has been accepted by other NATO member states. There would be no other candidates for headquarters. The final decision will be made at a summit of NATO defense ministers next week.

According to *dpa*, the new NATO support command centre could be located in the Cologne-Bonn region. The “Bundeswehr” already has its armed forces headquarters in the Bonn-Cologne area. It is said that NATO's reaction to strengthen its command and force structure is mainly because of “Russia's perceived aggressive policy”. A leaked report showed last October that military leaders were concerned that the alliance was not adequately prepared against a surprise Russian attack.

“[...] We took major decision to modernise the NATO Command Structure. [...] With the right forces, in the right place, at the right time”, NATO Secretary General *Jens Stoltenberg* said publicly after a meeting of NATO defence ministers.

On the same day, the German “*Rheinische Post*”, published in Düsseldorf, reported that almost without exception, the Federal Government has declared a list of military manoeuvres by Russia and NATO demanded by the *Left Party* as classified information. *Alexander Neu*, one of the signatories of the parliamentary question in the “*Bundestag*”, said: “Obviously, the German government and NATO want to continue their anti-Russian propaganda undisturbed by facts and public”. He had asked that the allegations of massive armaments and constant manoeuvres at the borders of NATO be substantiated with facts. As a lesson from this approach, he advises “even more distrust of statements from politics and ‘Bundeswehr’ when it comes to the danger of the ‘Russian Bear’.”

Kennan in his famous official justification for the US “containment policy”, the British Chief of Staff assumes again today, Russia was to be well stopped despite everything. The task of NATO was “to identify Russian weaknesses and then manoeuvre asymmetrically against them.”

Thereto “real institutional capacity” would have to be created in Russia's neighbouring states (!) so that they “have the strength and confidence to stand up to Russia”. Also, the West should make “more progress on reducing energy dependency on Russia. We should be telling the Russian population what's really going on” and yet NATO states should be looking to “identify our own vulnerabilities to Russian malign (!) influence and disinformation, and act to reduce them.” Needless to say, NATO ground forces should also be stationed in Russia's neighbouring countries. “[...] a platoon of infantry is worth a squadron of F-16s when it comes to commitment.” And so on.

So today, the British Chief of the General Staff is talking: very concrete war propaganda with the popular sacrificial rhetoric – as in projections. This was already the case in the Cold War. It justified the murder of millions of Koreans and millions of Vietnamese, the political, economic and military colonisation of the

Middle East and the African and South American continents, as well as the vassal status of the states of Europe.

Readiness for war of the new German government?

CDU, CSU and SPD have concluded their coalition negotiations. Everything has been presented very excitingly in the media. Much has been written and spoken about the contentious issues. The topic foreign policy of the coming German government was hardly worth a single line. Obviously, there was no need for discussion. Also, there should be “no alternative” in the coming years. We know what this means: no peace policy, no détente in relations with Russia, instead allegiance or even a pioneering role in the further escalation of the confrontation. People are not to reflect. They must be put to sleep or kept in suspense.

The migration issue is a topic that works well. This question absorbs people. It polarises and splits the country. Again, the West Germans and the East Germans are played off against each other. Germans in the East have very good arguments how they are supposed to be dealt with and what kind of stamp should be put on them. There are excellent contributions

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“War and peace in the media”

by Rainer Schopf

This was the topic of a conference on war and peace in the media which took place in Kassel (Germany), from 26 – 28 January 2018 organised by the *International Association of Lawyers against Nuclear Arms (IALANA)* whose mission is: peace through justice. The organiser was supported by five other organisations from the German peace movement.

Fortunately, the conference with 350 participants was overbooked. Most of the participants belonged to the generation 65+, so older Peace Friends from the hour zero right after the end of the Second World War. The middle generation was almost completely absent. Approximately 100 guests of the young generation about 25 years participated, the youngest guest, a baby, repeatedly drew attention to the joy of all participants.

Thereof it can be concluded: The peace movement in Germany is alive.

Many of the young people belonged to the *Jugendkulturkirche Kassel*, the place where the conference took place. IALANA wrote on the aim of the conference: “Media criticism has been around for a long time. With the coverage of the Ukraine conflict it has increased dramatically. Especially in the alternative media are always more interesting and more in-depth investigations. What’s more is the cabaret. Good cabaret has always been political. But *Max Uthoff* and *Claus von Wagner* invented a peace cabaret with their ‘Anstalt’; a new form of political education. That’s what the conference wants to present. But above all, media-critical scientists and journalists shall be given their say.”

This aspiration was completely fulfilled by the conference. In their short

keynote speeches, 25 speakers answered the following questions: War in the media: How is it reported, why is it reported like that? Where do the impulses of the media come from? How do we deal with propaganda? What options do media users have?

Some focal points of the conference are briefly mentioned, for example the cabaret “Die Anstalt”. Max Uthoff spoke about the entanglements of German media. Very impressively he described his meeting with *Argyris Sfountouris* in a programme about the atrocities of the Nazis in Greece, which he survived as a child in his Greek village and for which Germany refuses to make any compensation until today. *Gabriele Krone-Schmalz* reported in an excellent way about the confrontation policy against Russia in the media. She addressed herself in detail to the Ukraine conflict and the Crimea. *Markus Fiedler*, teacher from Oldenburg, impressively revealed the dark side of the *Wikipedia* platform. His films can be seen on *KenFM*. In it he investigates the media campaign against *Daniele Ganser*, who was denounced in the media after the publication of his book “Illegal wars”. *Kurt Gritsch* reported on the controlled debate of the Kosovo war, in particular on the reprehensible role of the red-green coalition under *Schröder/Fischer*, without which this war would not have been possible. It was repeatedly emphasised that war in the media is increasingly no longer referred to as war, but euphemistically declared as humanitarian intervention. And of course: *Konstantin Wecker*. He crowned the conference with a wonderful concert on the subject of peace,

which he feels committed to as an activist for a long time.

Videos of the conference are online at www.ialana.de. All presentations will be available in written form – published as a book by IALANA.

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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

Publisher: Zeit-Fragen Cooperative

Editor: Erika Vögeli

Address: Current Concerns,

P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich

Phone: +41 (0)44 350 65 50

Fax: +41 (0)44 350 65 51

E-Mail: CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch

Subscription details:

published regularly electronically as PDF file

Annual subscription rate of
SFr. 40,-, € 30,-, £ 25,-, \$ 40,-

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Annual subscription rate of
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“It’s about our dignity”

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to this right down to the mainstream. On 31 January 2018, the “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” writes: “Der Tag, an dem ich Ost-deutscher wurde” (The day I became an East German).

Human dignity instead of “public relations” and “Change Management”

“Human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority.” ... How far has the German state moved away from these two core sentences of the German constitution? What about the other NATO states? “The Century of the Self” is an almost four-hour *BBC* documentary from 2002. The film (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJ3RzGoQC4s>) documents how

the “elites” in the US (and not only there) thought about us citizens and acted. By no means we were rational and humane, but compulsive and aggressive ... and if there are many of us, we would rapidly become an unpredictable and homicidal “mass” of people ... but only as long as we live our lives without supervisory control from above.

That’s why it needs the “elites” that have been using us for 100 years now with the help of various manipulating techniques (“public relations”, “Change Management”, etc.) lead us to exactly where these “elites” want us to be and we are supposed to believe that we too wanted it exactly the same way. At *Wikipedia* you can read, “The Century of the Self” is an award-winning British docu-

mentary by *Adam Curtis*. It explores the impact of the work of *Sigmund Freud*, *Anna Freud*, and *Edward Bernays* on the behaviours of businesses and governments dealing with, analyse, and control people.”

On the other hand, it says in a commentary on the German Basic Law “Personal dignity consists in the fact that man, as a spiritual-moral being, is destined for self-determination in freedom and self-confidence and to have an impact on the environment. Dignity of man is the inner and at the same time social value and respect which man has for his sake.”

If this is really done, then the stock market has become obsolete, the war policy can be overcome and all “elites” have to come down to earth: as man among men, “born free and equal in rights and dignity”.

The Good Services – foreign policy instrument par excellence of neutral Switzerland

Interview with Toni Frisch by Radio SRF*



Toni Frisch
(picture ma)

mw. "Switzerland's Good Services have a long tradition and play a key role in Swiss peace policy. Switzerland can build bridges where others are blocked because it does not belong to any of the centres of power and has no hidden agenda." (Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA, Good Services)

There is no better way to explain the humanitarian commitment of neutral Switzerland in the world. The Swiss diplomat and vice-president of the Swiss Red Cross, Toni Frisch, testifies in an interview with Radio SRF Switzerland's wide range of possibilities for participating in good services. He gives an impressive account of his three years in Ukraine as OSCE Representative, which led to the exchange of 380 prisoners between Kiev and Eastern Ukraine at the end of December 2017. Toni Frisch is particularly pleasant for today's media consumer because he does not tune in to the chorus of those who are blind in the western eye, but rather clearly expresses: The mutual interaction is objectionable on both sides of the contact line, he doesn't turn his hand on either side.

According to Toni Frisch, further negotiations are now on the agenda for the next time in order to find constructive solutions in Ukraine. In order to be able to cope with the supply of the population and other everyday problems, an early ceasefire would be desirable.

Radio SRF: How did the exchange work? Who had which prisoners?

Toni Frisch: We started at the beginning of May 2015 and in the first 15 months we exchanged about 160 prisoners in small groups. At the same time, however, we worked towards a large exchange

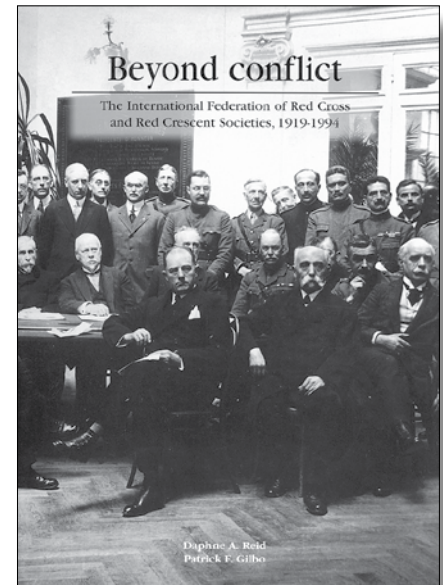
so that most of the prisoners could finally be released. This exchange took place on 27 December 2017 and was remarkably lean. Of course, logistical preparations were needed because the prisoners from all over the country were brought together, which actually worked. But before it was a tedious, laborious work. Every 14 days, lists were discussed at the negotiations in Minsk: Who is trapped where? Is he even trapped or missing? Maybe he is dead? Or is he in the presumed prison? A large group was involved in these investigations, a whole network, all very committed.

Do you know the conditions under which the prisoners lived?

I was the first to visit prisoners in the east, in Donetsk and Lugansk, as early as October 2016, and then again in August and October 2017. So, I was able to see how the situation has changed slightly. I have seen the conditions under which they were held in the prisons on both sides. I have also had the opportunity on several occasions to speak to prisoners' relatives in Donetsk, Lugansk and Ukraine. That's why I know exactly what the conditions were like for the prisoners. One always had the feeling that the prisoners in the East were probably held much worse than in the West: Ukraine is a constitutional state and those on the other side were separatists or terrorists. You cannot say that. Because you have to be aware that three years ago it was one country, the prisons were under the same laws and the same organisation. One cannot expect to arise two completely different conditions overnight in the prisons. That is why I have always resumed, not even to be provocative: The conditions on both sides are essentially similar. Of course, it is not as we imagine it in Switzerland that people would have to be accommodated. They also have a different past, and it is also necessary to know where people lived before, for example in a dacha, with or without electricity, with or without running water. From this point of view, they have not made the same demands as we here think they must be fulfilled.

Were the prisoners indicted judicially? Did they have a trial?

That was very different. In the East, in Donetsk and Lugansk things were rather simple: people having been captured with the weapon in their hands, as well as soldiers having fought against their separatist regime, came to prison without any



court trial. Naturally they also were taken as pawns to negotiate the release of their own people. In Ukraine it is much more complicated. Not everybody has been released yet, but most of them were. There were some in a preliminary investigation or in an investigation, in part they had just been judicially convicted, but had not yet begun to serve their sentence. Others had already started to serve their sentence or, just now, after two or three years, almost finished it. So there were many different legal situations. Some had been convicted or charged as war criminals, but the evidence was not clear enough to challenge the other side. So it is a very complicated legal situation. [...]

Earlier you said that there are more prisoners. What kind of people are they and how many?

These are those where it is controversial to which category they belong, where the cases are not clear and it takes more time for the individual case. The mills grind slowly and need a while, but I expect that we can do another round in the next few months for the remaining, maybe 100 or 150 persons in total, and I really hope everyone else becomes free during the year.

How difficult was it to achieve this breakthrough?

[...] I was in Minsk over 70 times. The sound was often very aggressive and nasty on both sides. It was so emotionally charged that it was difficult to come to a constructive conclusion. I got the im-

* Toni Frisch was from 1980 on first coordinator for operations of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit. From 2000 on he was Delegate of the Federal Council for Humanitarian Aid and head of this corps. Until April 2011 he was deputy director of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) with the rank of an ambassador. Since June 2015, he is Vice President of the Swiss Red Cross SRK. As part of the coordination of the UN Humanitarian Aid, Ambassador Toni Frisch led two international consultative committees. Since May 2015, he is OSCE Representative in Ukraine.

"The Good Services – foreign ..."

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pression that people do not want a solution, they are looking for problems. They put the whole load to the other side, they themselves are the victims. This was done by both sides exactly the same way.

You have a lot of experience in negotiation, in diplomatic matters. [...] What do you do in such a situation when it gets loud?

Sometimes I knock on the bottle very loudly when needed. Furthermore I do not have just a squeaky voice, I can usually prevail somewhat reasonably. It also happened that I said to the translator: Stop, I do not want to hear that, stop, do not translate! Sometimes you have to be strict.

How much pressure can a diplomat like you apply?

Depending on how much the others accept as pressure. Theoretically none, but you can try to motivate, convince. [...] That's how it worked in certain cases, that you came to a solution. But everything, really everything was politicized, even sober technical questions, which could easily be clarified in a casual conversation, everything was politicized.

Do you have any example so that we can imagine something?

For example at the crossings from Ukraine to Lugansk, they repeatedly accused each other of who is to blame, that the crossings are not opened. It was obvious that the will was not there on both sides. If you do not want to seek a solution, if the political will is lacking, then it just will not work.

But that also applies to other situations. [For example, tuberculosis in eastern Ukraine, which was long concealed; after the problem was obvious, Switzerland was able to supply important diagnostic equipment. Or environmental problems such as hazardous waste landfills in abandoned coal mines, possibly also with radioactive material, which both parties deny.]

How should we imagine your work? Did you negotiate especially in Minsk, or were you partly at the front or "contact line" as you call it?

Both, but primarily my job is in Minsk. There the negotiations take place, all problems go there over the common table of the working group "Humanitarian", which I also coordinate. But at the same time my principle has always been that I personally have a look for problems which were the greatest and most difficult ones – even at the time at DEZA (Swiss Agency for Development

The human rights situation in the Ukraine and in the Crimea

me. The relevant Swiss authorities know that Belarus also pursues good offices in terms of Ukraine and that Kazakhstan is ready to do so. Certainly it is also about the presidents trying to make a name for themselves, but the situation is well known in these countries and so are both conflicting parties. By all accounts, the new Austrian government wants to become more active too, but might get slowed down by the EU, in particular by Germany. If successfully, is not at all sure, because with Italy and Slovakia, two EU countries have already shown interest in motion in the Ukraine conflict. Moldova, too, has recently been trying to build bridges. If all these countries come out of the wood, then things could really be set in motion in the Ukraine conflict. It is good that Toni Frisch, in addition to UN reports, points to the miserable human rights situation on both sides of the contact line and that his reporting is independent from the biased western view. It is

clear that the Russian authorities in Russia and the Crimea often do not meet European human rights standards. However, Swiss Ambassador *Gérard Stoudmann* visited the Crimea on behalf of the Council of Europe and clearly stated in a report that there could be no talk of systematic violations of human rights against certain groups of people in the Crimea. This also applies to the so-called People's Republics of Luhansk and Donetsk. On the other hand, there is reason to suspect that the Ukrainian intelligence service SBU maintains secret prisons, to which the ICRC and Toni Frisch have no access. This probably not without the US tolerating it. It is good that also the UN points to the miserable human rights situation in Ukraine and in the rebel areas. In the Crimea, there are violations of human rights, but so far these are isolated cases. It is unacceptable that the West, for geopolitical reasons, closes its eyes to Ukraine, which systematically violates human rights.

and Cooperation (SDC)) or as head of Humanitarian Aid. I was the first of all to be in the East, and six times I have been in Donetsk and Lugansk, but also in Ukraine, on the line of contact on both sides. I had conversations and could visit the prisons. But I also visited hospitals, child and orphan homes to see where the biggest humanitarian problems are.

And where are the biggest humanitarian problems?

Primarily in the east, east of the contact line, actually directly in the contact zone, plus-minus 5 to 10 kilometers inside this zone. There are a few hundred thousand people, who are badly cared for conflict situations, where the access to the aid agencies, the ICRC, the UN, or even to bilateral actions, for example to Switzerland, is not given or only temporary given or very dangerous. You also have to protect yourself, because it happens again and again that also helpers or repair teams, who want to repair the water supply, are attacked. A big danger also is that very large areas are mined by both sides. And during the changing of the contact line there were several mining phases, so that no one exactly knows where the mines are. That's going to be a year-long problem, even if there's a truce tomorrow and they say they want to remove the explosive mines – there's going to be a problem over years to get rid of all that. So the biggest problems – to answer your question – are inside this contact line zone or in the east.

If you read newspaper articles – there are always drop by drop reports, but not as

many as at the beginning – I got the impression that the two parties are close to each other, that hardly anyone moves and that nothing works. Is this impression correct? You speak of the contact line?

Yes exactly.

That's so. It's like 100 years ago on the western front in France, where the Germans were on call distance with the French and the English and fired at their trenches. That's the same with the line of contact, a completely useless war. You bombard each other with artillery or tanks or with light weapons, but the front line, the contact line, does not change their position effectively.

And yet you accomplished in this difficult environment, along with all the other things you did, that 380 prisoners were released. How did that succeed?

Simply "nid lugg lo, nid lugg lo" (never leave a gap), insist again and again. In addition, all parties have said: we want the exchange, only you do not want. But when it got specific, three new problems were invented or "uncovered". Sometimes they did not know if they really existed. In dealing with the realities, one is generous. Time and again appeal, appeal – to reason, to humanity, to the humanitarian principles, cite examples from families that have been heard on both sides. The parents, the siblings, who urged insistently to do everything so that the people could be released. But I could not force the dialogue partners to exchange, but only help to find the way, help to solve individual problems of a

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"The Good Services – foreign ..."

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technical or organisational nature, clarify, explain and finally create conditions, so that both sides said: now we want. Afterwards the political will is necessary, in this case partly also with pressure from outside, from Germany and France as members of the contact group, that finally *Poroshenko* and *Putin* on the highest level agreed to make this exchange.

And for the list, which we have painstakingly "zämebrösmeled" (pieced together), over months of discussions, *Putin* said: Yes, now the exchange should take place before the end of the year 2017. It needed: the political will at the highest level.

Egon Bahr, Willy Brandt's deceased companion, once said in the daily conversation that the key to success is ultimately the persons sitting opposite to each other in negotiations, the interpersonal, the "chemistry", the confidence that the other person keeps his word. Do you experience it that way?

Yes, that is certainly true already, but you have to be able to handle it, if not all keep their word or handle the truth not as I would perhaps handle it; if there is no trust among each other, but above all mistrust. I note very little trust: I have said many times, this is not a peace process, but a dispeace process. But you must not keep the reins slack, you have to filter that away, even refrain from reacting when both sides try to instrumentalise me. Some would like to accuse me of not being completely neutral. In this respect, I am pretty steady, because as soon as someone could accuse me of that, I would probably have to end my mandate. But so far that has not been the case.

Toni Frisch, these prisoners are about people, not just soldiers, but also their relatives. If you say you also visited the hospitals and saw what the biggest humanitarian problems are. Did you just have to stay factual and leave everything emotional aside?

Yes, of course one should not forget the emotional aspects, that does not bounce back off me like the water off duck feathers. That touches me a lot and always gives me new energy. When I see problems, it automatically works in me, whether I like it or not, to find a solution. I cannot help it. Still, you have to try not to get too much involved emotionally. It does not need "dogooders", you have to try soberly, pragmatically and purposefully to solve a problem, step by step. Sometimes it just takes a hundred steps, three forward and two back, or two forward and three back. "Nid lugg lo" ("Keep at it!"), and finally there is an outcome, as here with the prisoners. Also at the crossings improvements were made,

where the number of staff was increased at the controls where I could assert that the weight per person has increased from 50 to 150 kilograms when going to the West, to material or to get food. In that sense, you just have to stay tuned.

Now you have solved a problem – which one do you see next?

It would be nice if all prisoners were released this year. Then there are a large number of missing people, which is a big political burden and a big human burden for the families. You have to try and push that forward. We have been there for two years and made certain small successes. Still also this is heavily politicised.

Missing – are those people in jail or dead?

People who presumably – most likely are dead. Maybe some of them have gone abroad, partly we do not know that, even the families do not, or they do not say it. The fact is, you have to expect about 2,000 dead, whether they are in mass graves or in individual graves, is still to be clarified. We know of many who could be identified, and that is what we are closely with the ICRC and with both sides working at. But we have to do it informally and do not want to hang a lantern on it.

Is there a chance that you could soften the fronts a little, that the process quasi would be continued on the political level?

The whole thing is highly political. Of course we deal with operational and technical issues. Still, the whole thing is highly political. This is reflected in the fact that *Putin* and *Poroshenko* had to say yes to this exchange list. But I hope and expect that some progress is now possible in other policy areas, or even in the economic or security sphere, because some confidence has been built up with the negotiations over the past few months. I hope so, and probably both sides and also the four negotiators hope: Russians, Ukrainians, Germans and French.

Is there a specific proof of this?

This is more than "a feeling". Hope is there (...) One would now take it on with new energy and try to make progress in all areas.

Toni Frisch, because you are under the contract of the OSCE, you possibly are not allowed to make political statements, therefore I will ask you this blanket question: When on the one hand the Russians help the separatists and on the other, the USA helps the Ukraine, how great is the possibility of the war being over, let us say, in two years?

There are naturally different aspects which must be taken into consideration. The first is the large international cli-

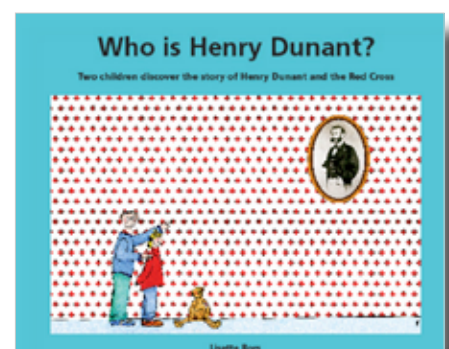
mate, what happened in Syria, in North Korea, how do things generally look in Iran or in the Mid-East since all of the pianos are being played politically. One or the other development can lead to positive results for the Ukrainian conflict – or to a deadlock. Both results are possible. Then, one must consider how long similar conflicts last [...] But one should concretely try to achieve constructive results in the Ukraine, always being conscious of how long it can last. It is not possible that one can make a peace agreement magically appear. Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh are 20 year old conflicts, in which one is partly not any further than we are in the Ukraine. When we look at things in proper relations, we have made progress but I do not expect that there will be a peace agreement in the near future. When one achieves a truce of arms in the Ukraine, it is something wonderful. Then one could already solve most of the problems: the care of the neediest in the line of contact and daily and environmental questions. But a truce of arms needs to happen.

Source: "Toni Frisch und seine Arbeit in der Ostukraine" (Toni Frisch and his work in the East Ukraine) *Radio SRF 4 News*. Tagesgespräch vom 8.1.2018 (Talk of the day from 08.01.2018). Interview: Ivana Pribakovic

(The interview was slightly abbreviated)

mw. Missions as in the Ukraine, as a mediator between conflicting parties, are much better suited to neutral Switzerland than to smarm over armed military alliances. The Swiss Federal Council's recent media release on the abandonment of Good Services fits in perfectly: "The chief of the army, Corps commander Philippe Rebord, will be traveling to the meeting of the Chiefs of the General staff of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) from 15 to 16 January 2018 in Brussels, Belgium." (Berne, 15 January 2018)

It is time for Switzerland to say goodbye to the war alliance "Partnership for Peace" (PfP) and to use the funds released for the broken up national defense. Moreover, there are enough other things to do for Switzerland in the areas of Good Services, disaster relief, Humanitarian Aid and development cooperation around the globe.●



ISBN 978-3-909234-08-0

Sweden is a de facto NATO member, and Switzerland will soon be?

A longer article on the news portal *german-foreign-policy.com* shows that Sweden has become a de facto NATO member. So, Sweden is doing great manoeuvres with NATO. For example, the *Aurora* manoeuvre, which took place in Sweden in September 2017 together with troops from numerous NATO countries, including the USA, Norway, Denmark, France and others. In the process, urban fighting also took place in parts of Stockholm.

Switzerland, too, is led into NATO by our political and military establishment on the very same road that Sweden took. We have been member of the “Partnership for Peace (PfP)” for 20 years, and since 2014 we have also been member of the “Interoperability Platform of NATO (IOP)”. The *Sipol B 2016* states that in the event of a war, Switzerland will fight together with other armed forces if necessary, explicitly only with those with interoperability. Translated into German, this means that only NATO would be considered for such a “cooperation”. At the IOP, interoperability is practiced at least in staff manoeuvres and much of it here is adapted to NATO, even the degrees of non-commissioned officers.

Swiss military is under NATO command in Kosovo. The US had cut it off from Serbia with a massive bombing cam-

paign to build and operate *Camp Bondsteel*, one of the largest military bases outside the USA. Swiss soldiers take part in manoeuvres with NATO members again and again. The head of the Swiss army was just at a meeting of senior officers of the NATO states.

But the people don't realise it, because our big opinion manipulation media don't allow a discussion about it nor spread relevant news about it. For example, the “*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*” and other media did not report on the major NATO conference held in Zurich on 16/17 February 2016 at the invitation of the Swiss Federal Council. The DDPS did not publish a brief communication until the start of the conference. 100 senior officers from the NATO Command of all 28 member countries as well as PfP and IOP members, including Switzerland, took part. All newer NATO members have been prepared through these institutions for membership in the war alliance.

At the same time, the Federal Council, with the blessing of the Swiss parliamentarians, crushed the formerly constitutional based army, which according to Art. 58 of the Federal Constitution serves with priority for “war prevention”, under the title “Further development of the army (WEA)”. With only 6 combat battalions (and cannon fodder in 17 infantry

battalions, which, according to the Federal Council, have only “limited defensive capabilities” and consequently no means of air and anti-tank and fire support) it can no longer fulfil the obligation according to The *Hague Convention* of 1907, to refuse by force, in the event of war, the use of its territory in return for the recognition of neutrality.

In the next war in Europe, the United States and NATO will immediately use our airspace and our territory, and then Russia will intervene in our country. Then we will be at war, defenceless by our own fault. Such a situation is conceivable because the US and NATO have taken a military stand around Russia, directly at its western border, and Russia has been pointing out for years that it cannot accept this threat and will take military action against it if necessary. The use of nuclear weapons was also mentioned. Now the US Navy is even building – what a provocation – a fleet base in Ukraine, on the Black Sea, just 300 kilometres from the Crimea. There is already a small airport with an over 3,000 meters (!) long runway. We will then learn in a very painful way what war means in concrete terms and how much cheaper a war-preventing army would have been.

Gotthard Frick, Bottmingen

Why a framework agreement cannot work Switzerland is wired differently

by Robert Seidel

In its new composition, the Federal Council would like to conclude a “framework agreement”, newly called “market access agreement” with the EU leadership by the end of 2018. After the turmoil at the end of 2017 – visit of EU Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, early commitment to the contribution of a cohesion billion for the EU, time limitation for the recognition of Swiss access to stock markets abruptly introduced by the EU and announcement of the new head of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ignazio Cassis, that he would press the reset button – now everything obviously stays the same. Or does it? Will the bullet be bitten and the subordinate role possibly accepted after all, via a framework agreement? The Federal Council would like to have various Swiss “industries” participate in its deliberations. Of course, it would be interesting to know why industries, which industries, and why exactly these? The

whole thing is to be re-coordinated by the new head of the Directorate for European Affairs (DEA), the well-known EU turbo Roberto Balzaretti. He is responsible as State Secretary for the coordination of all negotiations with the European Union. So the question arises as to why the Federal Council is still maneuvering and trying to score points in Brussels?

Let's face it: The EU has for some time now been building up an army for operations around the world, including “domestic” operations. Apparently, 70 years of peace are enough for the “peace power EU”. Less well-known, but even scarier, is the fact that in the EU states – despite the ECHR and human rights and despite persistent protests – the death penalty has been made possible again since 2008.¹ Unemployment, the working poor, unregulated migration, unresolved debt problems and the sale of public services remain un-

resolved issues in the EU countries. This is what our contracting partner for a framework agreement looks like at first glance, from the outside.

Vote on tax rates

The EU also differs from Switzerland internally: If people in any EU country are dissatisfied with their level of taxation, they cannot influence this through a communal assembly or a cantonal or statewide vote. Tax rates are determined by the government. With very few exceptions, factual issues cannot be voted on: whether this or that building is built, or whether you have to pay radio and television fees, or if a new jet plane is to be financed – in the EU all these decisions are made by professional politicians instead of by the citizens. Politicians like *Donald Tusk*, *Jean-Claude Juncker*, *Emmanuel Macron*, *Sebastian*

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"Why a framework ..."

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Kurz, Silvio Berlusconi, Andrea Nahles or Mariano Rajoy make the decisions. These politicians are often passed from one political post to the next – like *Jean-Claude Juncker*, who switched from the post of Luxembourg Prime Minister to EU Commission President, or, in a similarly undemocratic way, *Jose Manuel Barroso* or *Roman Prodi*; only *Martin Schulz* had no luck with his own party on the occasion of his proposed change from the post of EU Parliament President into a new German Federal Government. All these professional politicians form their own political caste. They are not subject to the outcome of any election. They repeatedly appear in various crucial positions.

EU – government without a people

When a German Chancellor decides to open the German and thus the European borders, as *Angela Merkel* did in 2015, then this can be done quite simply, all laws aside. Much can be said about the EU, but one thing it is not, and that is democratic. Not everyone is allowed to play the role of *Angela Merkel*. If, for example, *Viktor Orbán* or *Beata Szydło* from the Visegrad states should express their wishes, then it may easily happen that their country is had up before the *European Court of Justice ECJ* for violating the "spirit of the EU".

Who appoints the EU judges remains a secret and so does the reason for which they are appointed – none of them is elected by the people. Equally mysterious is the question of why a Finnish judge should judge on Italian stone oven pizzas, or a Maltese judge on the Swedish mining laws concerning iron ore mining.

With a framework agreement, pardon, a "market access agreement", Swit-

zerland would uncomplainingly have to implement all EU provisions. Then even a referendum or an initiative would be of no more avail. Everything would be prescribed down to the smallest details, even to the curvature of the banana, but this would of course still be relatively irrelevant. The matter becomes more interesting when we get to tax questions, financial regulations or regulations in the areas of construction or of food (for example concerning GM technology). The regulatory requirements will be substantial, and in cases of doubt, if we disagree, a "foreign judge" will turn the balance. Maybe a Portuguese or a Lithuanian ... and maybe the Federal Council will then present the fact, that a Swiss was allowed sit at the table when the judgement was pronounced, as a success of its negotiating efforts with the EU.

Why no solid free trade agreement?

For whom does such subordination to the EU bring so many advantages that they have been pushing and shoving, lying, and soft-soaping us for several decades now? Even the assertion that things go better with the bilateral treaties than without them, is completely unproven. It is but an allegation. Of course, the proponents highlight the alleged benefits. But honestly, more could have been achieved with just a few well-negotiated free trade agreements. More than ever before, the bilaterals with their guillotine clause have proven to be a burden on our country.

And it is probably more due to our Federal Council's europhile negotiations than to the EU, that no new appropriate and flexible solution has been found, which of course does not make things better. Why not, for example, re-draft the contracts between EU and EFTA? This may work without compulsion and with-

out pressure, tailor-made for each of the many contractors.

What have we got that they do not have?

Why do we not bring all this face to face with what today constitutes part of our political coexistence:

- We can vote at the communal, cantonal and federal levels on a wide range of topics, including fundamental issues. No citizen in the entire EU is allowed to do this!
- We can initiate political decisions on the initiative and referendum laws ourselves and thus influence the political events in the country at every level. This is what citizens of EU countries dream of.
- We vote on major financial expenditures (Gotthard Base Tunnel), changes in the law (pension reform) or changes in taxation. Many citizens in the EU would also like to be able to do that.
- Our politicians are much closer to their constituents. If they want to make a career, they must appear credible and honest to the citizens in order to succeed in the elections.

Of course, we know that our legal framework contains many small imperfections, too. But the comparison between the *Gotthard Base Tunnel* and the *Berlin-Brandenburg Airport* alone speaks volumes in terms of democratic popular participation, the level of cost overruns, the non-compliance with time schedules, the quality of the work done and the satisfaction of the population. Our decision-making processes are often longer, but the consensus is broader, and therefore everybody is better satisfied.

The independent existence of officials

Unfortunately, we cannot but note with regret that parts of our administration some-

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Various voting posters. At the communal, cantonal and federal level, Swiss citizens have the opportunity to directly influence politics through voting. Individuals, groups, parties or other organisations campaign/engage in the different votes.

VW Dieselgate: Economic war or fraud?

by Dr-Ing Ernst Pauli

The author of these lines spent 20 years of his professional life working in the field of emissions of motor vehicles, and when the first reports on the subject came up, he firmly believed that this was a constructed accusation and ultimately an economic war against the German automotive industry. He was supported in this opinion knowing that, for physical-technical reasons, NO_x emissions are “naturally” higher in normal road travel at higher engine power than in emission testing, which is clear to every expert. After all, it is clear to every layman that the engine of a vehicle becomes “naturally” much louder during strong acceleration. More and more investigation has shown, however, that manipulation, not to say fraud, but at least the unethical behaviour of the engineers and managers involved plays a role as well.

What caused the scandal?

The first and triggering report on the VW Dieselgate, published in May 2014,¹

was initiated by the ICCT (*International Council on Clean Transportation*), an organisation founded 10 years ago as an informal network of experts in the field of vehicle emissions. Later it became an independent, non-profit-oriented research organisation with the purpose of advising politicians and legislators on environmental pollution and emissions from motor vehicles. Although particularly supported by American foundations worth billions, such as the *Hewlett Foundation*, the *Packard Foundation*, the *Rockefeller Brothers Fund* and in Europe the *Mercator Foundation* it pursues mainly non-American projects in developing countries and emerging markets such as China and India. In the United States, the ICCT has long been involved in comparing the official results of vehicle tests carried out on roller dynamometers in terms of fuel consumption and CO₂ emissions with the behaviour of vehicles in real road traffic, on motorways and interstate roads, measuring them in actual driving operation. Similarly, such tests are also carried out by

European authorities and research institutes. Road testing has recently become possible as well with regard to the emission of pollutants such as hydrocarbons, particles and nitrogen oxides, since the measuring devices have become so small that they can be taken in the boot of a car measuring this way exhaust emissions. On behalf of the ICCT, the University of West Virginia has carried out such measurements on the road and compared them with the officially prescribed emission limits, the vehicles have to be compliant with. The result was published on 15 May 2014 and was also forwarded to the US *Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)* and the *CARB (California Air Resources Board)*. It included emission measurements in urban traffic, on motorways and mountain roads of three diesel vehicles, two VW brand vehicles and one BMW brand vehicle. The tests showed spectacular, several times higher NO_x emissions

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“Why a framework ...”

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times start to lead an uncontrolled life of their own under their chief officials, and that they start initiating things that were not always agreed on and that are even against the wishes of the population (such as *Bohlogna* or *PfP*). We strive to bring those officials back to their original tasks.

Some want a bigger slice of the EU cake

In our country, as in every other country, too, there are also groups of people who want to put their own economic advantage above the rights and independence of their fellow citizens. Some of them argue that in favour of preserving jobs and wealth in our country, they are “necessity-driven” to renounce some of their rights (and of course some of the rights of their fellow citizens as well) to the benefit of the EU, because it is our largest trading partner. (Although, on closer inspection, their course of action is not quite so unselfish.) Some of them earn their money as global players or working for global players. They suggest we give up rights so that the piece of the EU cake stays big enough. In exchange for a waiver we would then be allowed to continue yodelling or shopping cheaply in the EU countries ... – only concerning the big picture, we should be “insightful” and leave the final decisions to the “experts” in Strasbourg ...

Where is the broad and controversial discussion?

A broad and controversial debate is missing. Today, instead of 200 newspapers (1980), we have only a handful of major publishers and some europhile TV and radio stations – and these facilities are now expected to provide a discussion platform for opinion forming. But in the meanwhile, more and more citizens have got the impression that they are being fobbed off with PR, spin doctoring, opinions patched together, or half-truths.

EU accession or “cold” affiliation to the EU?

Both sides – the EU in Brussels and the “cherry pickers” on the Swiss side – have been planning a Swiss accession to the EU for over two decades, whether as an EU member or in the form of a quiet “cold” affiliation. The citizens are meanwhile to be mentally prepared for the “change”. Power and money are the driving forces. There are many who want limitless and unrestricted trade and limitless and unrestrained top down government without the “pesky” participation of those affected. Instead, a bit of folklore and “Swissness” may be allowed for everyone ...

Direct democracy as an export hit, instead of Brussels absolutism

This is the wrong direction. The Federal Council’s statements sound hollow, the media repeat things parrot-fashion or spool the film forward. Would not our neighbours

in Germany and France give their right arm to at last, at least once, have a say in politics, which however decides mercilessly over their heads. The Austrians would also like to have a say in a few questions that directly affect their lives. Now they have just been ripped off: Instead of “direct democracy based on the Swiss model”, there is now monarchical governance under the aegis of a green president. In Greece, the quiet social catastrophe of the EU austerity measures to rescue the banks might long ago have been ended and money could have been paid again for doctors, hospitals and pensions.

Direct democracy is an export hit; despotism Brussels style is an outdated model from the era of enlightened absolutism. Almost everyone in the country knows this now. But does the Federal Council know yet? •

¹ Article 6 of the Treaty of Lisbon makes the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU legally binding. Article 2 of this EU Charter of Fundamental Rights states (2): “No one shall be condemned to the death penalty, or executed.” However, the explanations are also applicable. The so-called Explanatory Notes to Article 2 of the EU’s Charter of Fundamental Rights state in Article 2(2): “Deprivation of life shall not be regarded as inflicted in contravention of this article when it results from the use of force which is no more than absolutely necessary ... (c) “... in action lawfully taken for the purpose of quelling a riot or insurrection.” The second exception when the death penalty may be imposed is for “acts committed in time of war or of imminent threat of war”.

"VW Dieselgate: Economic ..."

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compared to those measured in the official tests, especially on VW vehicles.

Authorities became suspicious, and VW, asked for the reasons of the increased emissions, apparently showed little cooperation in the following discussions with authorities and tried to conceal and hide the real reasons for the very high NO_x emissions by all means, including clear lies and misinformation. VW even carried out a recall of 500,000 vehicles in the US in December 2014 "voluntarily", with the aim of concealment rather than clarification. It would, according to VW, solve the problem, but it did not make things any better, as the authorities had to prove to VW representatives. The source of the problems was deliberately concealed by VW and not eliminated. The then responsible VW manager was in the USA sentenced to seven-year prison in this context.² Apparently, it was believed over a long period of time that the authorities could be left in the dark about the true causes of the increased emissions. At the end of the day, repeated and increasingly extensive investigations and measurements carried out by the authorities concerned with high efforts confirmed the suspicion that optimised engine settings were tailored to provide the lowest possible emissions, but only in the prescribed test procedures. It was realised that similarly as in the road tests, the emissions increased inexplicably applying small, actually irrelevant variations of the test conditions, changed ambient temperatures or minor deviations from the prescribed driving cycle. This behaviour led the authorities to suspect that a manipulating engine control system, known in the USA as a "defeat device", switched off the emission-reducing measures outside the test conditions or reduced their effect. The technical discussions to clarify the reasons for the unexpected results took almost one and a half year until autumn 2015 without any results. It was only when the American environmental authorities threatened not to allow the sale of new VW models for the year 2016 that VW admitted the unbelievable, namely that the engine settings had been optimised with unfair means for the emission test and that a so-called defeat device had been used, which led in the final effect to many times higher NO_x emissions in the normal operation of the vehicles on the road compared to the test results. The goal of the exhaust gas legislation, the *Clean Air Act* in the USA, was reduced to absurdity. Following further investigations and discussions, the US Environmental Protection Agency formally issued a letter to VW and Audi on 18 September 2015, accusing them of violat-

And yet another attempt to hit VW?

ep. In the last weeks of January there was another massive press campaign against VW. It is based on a report in the "New York Times" about experiments initiated by VW and other automobile manufacturers in which reportedly monkeys were exposed to diesel engine exhaust gas. The tests were carried out in 2014, so they were probably planned before the Dieselgate. Nothing is publicly known about the actual procedures, driving cycles and concentrations or dilution factors used in these tests, and there is no report written.

In the same campaign, a measurement was reported in which healthy volunteers were exposed to nitrogen dioxide concentrations in air at the Aachen University Hospital. The study was planned in 2012, carried out in 2013 and 2014, i. e. well before the exposure of the diesel scandal.

In both cases, there is great moral indignation expressed: in all the newspapers, by the German Chancellor and even by the VW management. It signals outrage in retrospect, however, it actually ordered together with other companies this investigation. There is a detailed report about the experiments on humans available. They have been

approved by the Ethics Committee of the Aachen University. No wonder, since the test subjects were exposed to concentrations of nitrogen dioxide for 3 hours at a maximum of half of the MAK value of $6000 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ valid until 2009, a concentration that industrial workers were allowed to be exposed to until 2009 during their entire working life in Switzerland and Germany. The concentrations used were in the range of the new MAK limit value (from 2009 onwards) of $950 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ and, as expected, did not show any effects on the test persons. It is worth mentioning, and this has also got lost in the general agitation, that it was not a diesel engine exhaust gas investigated in Aachen, but an exclusive addition of nitrogen dioxide to the air. Here too, the impact of the press campaign is disproportionate to what actually happened. Experiments on animals and humans correspond to strictly controlled but normal research practice. Is it a strong indication of a staged economic warfare, when the attempts at apes, whose details are completely unknown, and the attempts on humans, who are nevertheless rather uncritical, are so highly played out?

ing the Clean Air Act in their vehicles by deliberately manipulating emission measurements by means of a "defeat device" and using software that detects when the vehicle is subject to an official emission test. That is how things began to take off, also in Europe.

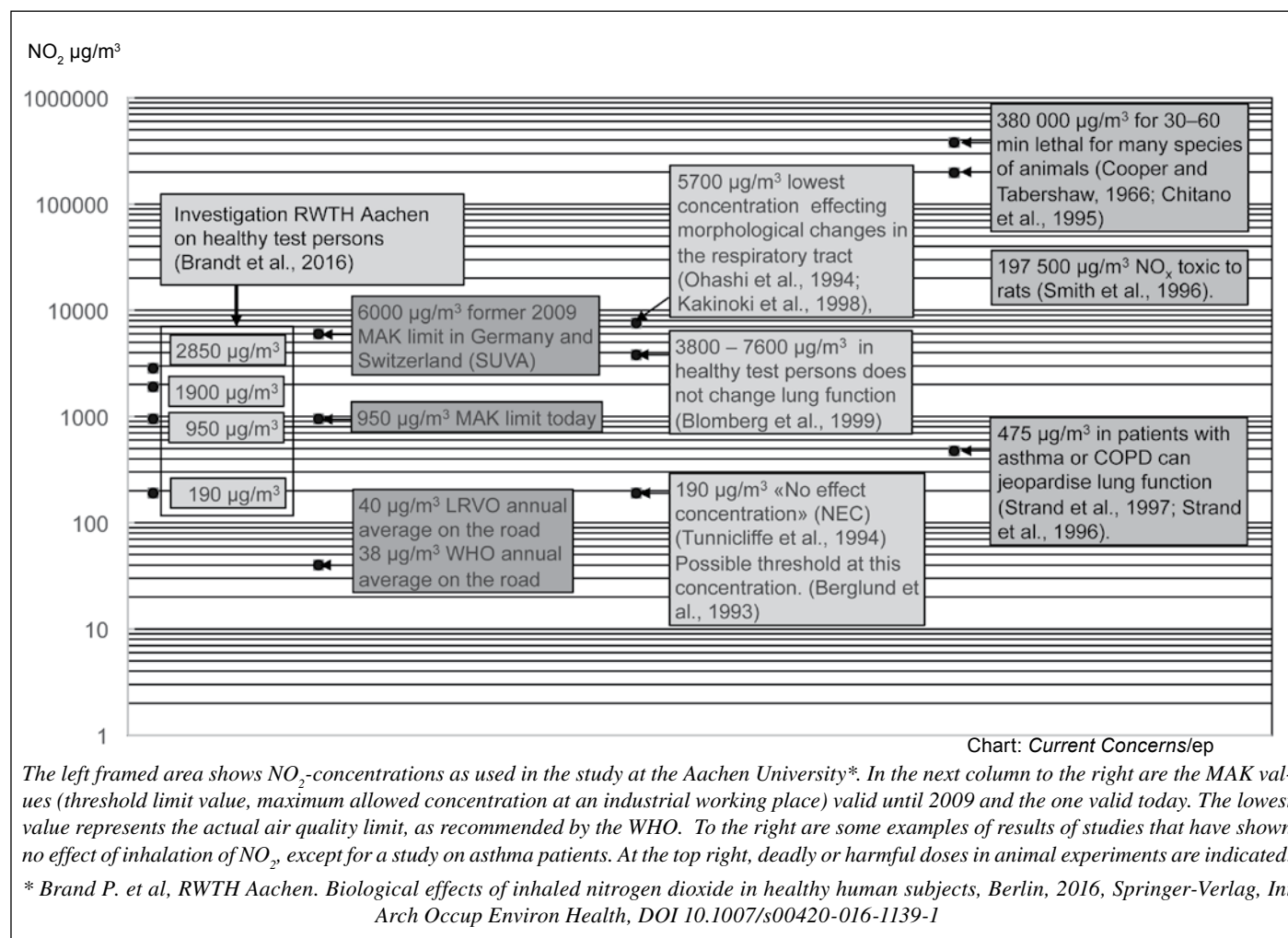
The so-called scandal has had a long history

There have been problems around the interpretation of exhaust gas legislation, including allegations of manipulation, as long as the regulations for limiting exhaust gas emissions exist. As early as 1973, a fine was imposed in the United States for the first time in this context. The official accusation that the laws were being circumvented inadmissibly repeatedly led to fines and requests for corrective measures to be rendered by car manufacturers. The technical and physical interrelationships and problems that arise are difficult to describe clearly in legislation. The conflict is inevitable.

A classic example is the discussion in 1995 about an air conditioning system in *General Motors* vehicles, which was switched off during the emission tests, but once used, it caused higher emissions during normal driving. GM had not declared this and had to pay a fine. With 44 million USD, it was comparatively moderate, similar to many other cases of European or American manufacturers.

Outside of the official tests, emissions legislation in normal road traffic has so far only limited effect and opens up room for interpretation. When there is talk about "defeat devices" in the press today, it is as well a flowing transition to technically necessary adjustments of the engines operating condition. The interpretations in this grey area are partly at the limit of what is justifiable, and there are apparently clumsy manipulations. Surprising and significant for such a complex problem is that the detailed proof of VW manipulation on the basis of individual program-lines of the engine control system was first presented at an event of the *Chaos Computer Club* in Hamburg³. The "programmer", who provided the proof on the software of his private vehicle by "hacking" the vehicle software, has done a very comprehensible job and later also testified in an investigation committee of the German "Bundestag". It was finally confirmed by his work that VW installed the so-called "acoustic function" as a defeat device under the pretext of damping the noise emission of the diesel engine during cold start. As soon as the ambient temperature deviates from the $20\text{--}30^\circ\text{C}$ prescribed for the test, the emission-reducing measures were switched off or reduced, allegedly in order to avoid increased noise of the engine in the cold state. It is also clear to the non-technician that with average an-

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nual temperatures in our latitudes of about 10°C, the specified temperature range does not occur too often and therefore the devices for emission reduction remain switched off or work reduced in a large portion of the operating time. The advantage achieved is actually banal. The auxiliary tank, which holds the chemicals carried in the vehicle for decomposition of the nitrogen oxides in the exhaust gas, would have had to be refilled more often than in the normal inspection intervals if the correct procedure had been followed. The customers were not expected to put up with this loss of comfort, and one was afraid to lose sales opportunities and market share.

Economic warfare?

The fact that VW is now at the centre of attention and is being attacked by many sides, even though other companies interpret the exhaust gas legislation in a similarly questionable way, must also be seen in conjunction with VW's corporate policy. Volkswagen's goal was to achieve an annual production of more than 10 million vehicles and thus become the number one in the motor vehicle market. In order to achieve this goal, sales of diesel

vehicles in the USA were to be accelerated with the argument of environmental friendliness and very low fuel consumption.⁴ This approach has probably provoked resistance. When the above-mentioned activities of environmentalists then revealed that at least one strong sales argument, i. e. that of low emissions, was inappropriate, the scandal came into being and the campaign against diesel engines in the USA and Europe was started. However, considering that the US vehicle population consists only of diesel vehicles to a very small extent, and that the vehicles concerned account for 0.2% of the American vehicle population, the "Dieselgate" as it is now in every newspaper does not seem really appropriate.

One should also compare the Dieselgate and the required fines with other scandals in the USA: The *Ford Pinto*, produced by Ford in the 1970s, was designed in such a way that the fuel-tank caught fire even in minor rear-end collisions. Lives were lost. There were more than 100 people killed in minor accidents. Ford had drawn up a frighteningly misanthropic bill according to which it was cheaper to compensate accident victims or their relatives than to make the fuel tank safer with an additional rubber cover at the price of 12 USD per vehicle. There were class ac-

tions, convictions and compensations. Finally, the punitive damages paid to the Department of Justice were reduced to a comparatively low 3.5 million USD fine.⁵

In one case with GM, defects in the ignition lock with fatal consequences (124 fatalities) were known to the company without triggering a recall and repair action. GM paid a fine of 900 million USD to the state and 600 million USD to survivors. The situation was similar with the Japanese airbag manufacturer *Takata*. Only in the United States, 70 million airbags had to be recalled, at least 14 people killed and 184 injured due to the defects of the product.⁶ The company admitted criminal offences, cooperated closely with the authorities and agreed to pay a billion dollars in fines to the state. In a recent case in 2014, *Toyota* was fined 1.2 billion dollars. Unintentional acceleration of Toyota cars had led to 89 fatal road accidents.⁷ In the case of VW it is not about people killed, but the fines are extremely high in comparison. Ultimately, an acknowledgment of debt by VW and subsequently a settlement⁸, an agreement between VW and the US Department of Justice was reached in January 2017 with a pure fine of 4.3 billion USD. The sum of VW's payments,

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the compensation payments to customers and any repurchases of vehicles, as well as the payments resulting from the settlement with the US Department of Justice, have already exceeded a total of 25 billion USD and are not in any way comparable to the aforementioned cases with direct fatalities.

The situation in Europe

In the meantime, it is clear that other manufacturers' vehicles in Europe are behaving the same or similarly. It is known that measures similar to the VW approach have been taken. The relevant legislation states that vehicles shall comply with emission limits under "normal operating conditions" and that defeat devices shall be permissible only if they are conducive to the protection and reliable operation of the vehicle. Due to this "soft" wording, it is also not disputed by the authorities that emission legislation lacks clarity, at least in Europe, that the wording of the laws and regulations is vague and imprecise and that there is wide room for interpretation.⁹ Each manufacturer has to struggle with the unclear regulations described above. However, the problem is of course solved in quite different ways, not always without doubt. The fact that the manufacturer VW, with its fuel-efficient diesel engines, is now being built up as the big and only culprit, although measurements show meanwhile that the newer VW brand vehicles, according to a comprehensive comparative ADAC measurement, have relatively low emissions¹⁰, has more to do with preventing the success of the VW brand as far as possible than with the actually used defeat-devices. Unfortunately, in Germany in particular, the topic is being cooked up in blind succession to the US actions. In any case, the driving bans on diesel vehicles in city centres that have been discussed are going far beyond a reasonable target.

The emission limits

In the background to all these discussions is the limit value for NO_x-emissions of diesel vehicles and the air quality, mainly in cities. All NO_x emission oxidises in air finally to NO₂. It is an irritant gas that is particularly effective in the respiratory tract. Limit values for NO₂ concentrations, which have a safety margin to the efficacy threshold, have been established from various toxicological studies on professionals who have been exposed to NO₂ emissions, long-term and short-term exposure. The *maximum allowable workplace concentration at an industrial workplace* (MAK, 8 h per day, 40 h per week) for NO_x is 950 µg/m³.¹¹ Opposite to this value, the WHO epidemiologically derived an effect threshold with a maximum allowa-

ble concentration in the ambient air of 40 µg/m³. It is only exceeded at central locations with extreme traffic density in conurbations. However, the large discrepancy between the limit values set from different viewpoints, after all a factor of 24, clearly shows that very different assessments exist on the effects of the NO₂ emissions, which are so hotly debated. The actual health consequences should definitely be kept as small as possible, but the uncertainty in assessing the effects of inhalation of NO₂ is extremely high. There is a number of publications which, based on the higher NO_x emissions recorded in real operation and the assumptions documented by the WHO, also report extreme figures for additional victims or deaths and lost years of life. In view of the many studies that do not find toxicological effects in the concentrations under discussion, such studies¹² should probably be referred to speculation. The planned driving bans on diesel vehicles in German city centres therefore lack a solid basis for the actual health hazard and the limit values to be applied. Against this background, the decisions on driving bans in Germany planned for February will be discussed very controversially.

In addition, NO_x emissions never occur on their own, but always together with potentially more harmful soot particles in the exhaust gas, with particulate matter from tyre and brake pad abrasion. The heated debate about a single pollutant is therefore not really effective. The fact that the limit values for particulate emissions of diesel vehicles with a proven carcinogenic effect are now being massively undercut by the use of particulate filters is not worth a single line in the current discussion. The whole system of transport and its emissions should be discussed. The diesel debate and the discussion on a single pollutant tend to distract from the overall problem. The question would be how to make individual transport more environmentally friendly in its present form. The diesel engine is still as good or as bad as the gasoline engine. In the exhaust of the latter were in September 2017 very high particle emissions detected when the engine started cold.¹³ This problem is currently also addressed with particulate filters for the gasoline engine, but hopefully not with a new press campaign.

Real road emissions have decreased

Already much earlier than current media coverage suggests, experts have dealt with the subject matter.¹⁴ It was already investigated in 2012 and earlier that real emissions on the road are above the limits prescribed for the official test cycle. Nevertheless, in a relative comparison between 2000 and 2014, a reduction of NO_x emissions in road transport operation by a factor of about 7 was document-

ed for real driving operation. During the same period, the limit values of the official tests were reduced by a factor of about 6. The stricter emission legislation has thus not remained ineffective.

Ethical aspects

It is more than surprising that in the meantime it has turned out that a large number of well-trained VW employees knew about the manipulations and that no one had tried to prevent the unethical approach or perhaps made it public. Practically all major companies, including VW, have a "code of ethics" and a "whistleblower system" in place to combat corruption, economic crime or unethical acts, and appropriate employee training is provided. A similar situation exists in American companies under the title "Raise an Ombuds Concern" or "Whistle-blower", where employees are asked to express their concerns in the event of rule or law violations to neutral ombudspersons or to external attorneys bound by the attorney-client privilege, as in the case of VW. Despite assurances, the system is or was apparently not used because of a fear of disadvantages and job losses, at least not in this case. Has the responsibility for the general public been lost to such an extent that the economic success of the company, the professional career, is more important than anything else? Are the internal discussions within the company only and exclusively focused on economic success? There is indeed a discussion about the ethical side of the Dieselgate, but unfortunately it is being led by newspapers or so-called "business ethicists" and is exhausted by criticising the complex management structure of the VW-Group and speculating who knew or was informed about what and when in the management. The way in which the issue has been dealt with and discussed at the immediate working level is nowhere found. A famous quote comes to mind that was made before the fatal NASA-Challenger mission was launched, where, contrary to the concerns of the engineers, the launch was given the go-ahead with catastrophic consequences, the death of 5 astronauts: "Take off your engineering hat and put on your management hat". This attitude has possibly played a role when the big Volkswagen dream of taking first place among vehicle manufacturers seemed to be in jeopardy. •

¹ Thompson, Gregory J. et al. In-Use Emissions Testing of Light-Duty Diesel Vehicles in the United States – Final Report, Center for Alternative Fuels, Engines & Emissions, West Virginia University, 15.5.2014

Educational reforms and “Change Management” put to the test Conference Report: Time for Change?

by Professor Dr Karl-Heinz Dammer*

cc. Time and again Current Concerns publishes critical articles to current developments in school and education. From different perspectives we have also revealed the undemocratic nature of enforcement and implementation of changes in schools imposed on teachers and students top down. Educational scientist Professor Dammer now reports on a conference with this topic, as one can only wish for. This report provides a solid overview of the course of the conference. Individual conference contributions and aspects will be explained in more detail in further editions of Current Concerns.

Under the title “Time for Change?”, provided very wisely with a question mark, the first annual conference of the *Gesellschaft für Bildung und Wissen e.V. (GBW)*¹ (Society for Education and Knowledge) took place on 3 February at the *Bergische University of Wuppertal*. Its topic was the paradox of the permanent change to which not only the German educational system has been exposed since the publication of the first Pisa study 2001. Therefore, the meeting obviously met the interest of many colleagues who arrived not only from all over Germany, but also from Switzerland and Austria and who made sure that the meeting with over 400 participants was the best visited of the GBW so far. Among other things, the great interest may be related to the fact that, for the first time, considerable space was dedicated to practical reports from schools or from colleagues committed to educational policy. This resulted in a wide range of practical and theoretical



“Therefore, the meeting obviously met the interest of many colleagues who arrived not only from all over Germany, but also from Switzerland and Austria and who made sure that the meeting with over 400 participants was the best visited of the GBW so far.” (picture “Gesellschaft für Bildung und Wissen e. V.”)

criticisms, which gave rise to some skepticism, but also conveyed encouraging examples and perspectives for intervention in the idle reform process.

Decreed innovations

The conference was thematically introduced by *Jochen Krautz* (conference organiser and Professor of art education at the Bergische University of Wuppertal) and *Ursula Frost* (Professor of general and systematic education at the University of Cologne). With some quotes, among other things on school development, Jochen Krautz revealed that all this talk about change does not require objectives and justifications, but that it only propagates change as intrinsically valuable and that it operates with simple juxtapositions of old and new. On the basis of *Edward*

Bernay's major work “Propaganda” Krautz showed that as early as 1928 strategies were developed how to manipulate people in terms of decreed innovations, namely, by staging disturbing events, the consequences of which can then allegedly only be prevented by the intended innovation.

The historical perspective

From a historical and systematic perspective, Ursula Frost recalled the double function that was attributed to the school in the early nineteenth century by *Schleiermacher*, namely to adapt future generations to society, but at the same time enabling them to judge in order to be able to examine the existing. Thus, it became clear that the adjustment of pupils to the needs of the

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- ² “Neue Zürcher Zeitung”, US-Richter kennen keine Gnade für VW-Manager (No mercy for VW-managers by US judges) 7.12.2017.
- ³ Domke, Felix. A hacker explains the VW fraud, lecture at the congress CHAOS COMPUTER CLUB, 29.12.2015
- ⁴ Ewing, Jack. *Faster, Higher, Farther. The Volkswagen Scandal*, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., New York, 2017, ISBN 978-0-393-25450-1
- ⁵ Birsch, Douglas. *The Ford Pinto Case: A Study in Applied Ethics, Business, and Technology*, Suny Series. 1.10.1994, ISBN13: 978-0-7914-2233-5

- ⁶ “Neue Zürcher Zeitung”, dpa. Takata zahlt Milliardenstrafe (Takata pays a fine) 13.1.2017.
- ⁷ ABC-News. Toyota to pay \$1.2B for hiding deadly ‘Unintended Acceleration’, 19.3.2014
- ⁸ US-Department of Justice. Volkswagen AG Agrees to Plead Guilty and Pay \$4.3 Billion in Criminal and Civil Penalties, 11.01.2017
- ⁹ “Deutscher Bundestag”, 18. Wahlperiode. Drucksache 18/12900, Berlin, 22.6.2017 (official hearing in the German parliament)
- ¹⁰ ADAC ECOTEST 09/2015 Stickoxide im Weltzyklus WLTC (Nitrogen oxides in the Worldwide harmonised Light Vehicle Test).

¹¹ European Commission SCOEL (Scientific Committee on Occupational Exposure Limits for NO_x), June 2014

¹² Anenberg, Susan et al. Impacts and mitigation of excess diesel-related NO_x emissions in 11 major vehicle markets, *Nature*, 25.5.2017, Vol 545, p.467

¹³ Platt, S. M. et al. Gasoline cars produce more carbonaceous particulate matter than modern filter-equipped diesel cars, *Nature Scientific Report*, 13.7.2017

¹⁴ Weiss, Martin et al. On-Road Emissions of Light-Duty Vehicles in Europe, *Environmental Science & Technology* 2011, 45, 8575–8581, doi.org/10.1021/es2008424

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labor market intensified by the Pisa study is nothing fundamentally new, but new, says Frost, are the technologies' intensity and spectrum with which this is taking place. With reference to the *Milgram* experiment, she urgently recalled the potential consequences of thoughtless adaptation to what was predefined.

Change Management

In his committed lecture, *Matthias Burchardt* (Academic Councillor in the field of educational science at the University of Cologne) explained in his dedicated lecture on the psycho-techniques used by *Change Management*. He used relevant quotes to illustrate how to break self-will and individuality that Change Management makes use of. Murmur in the audience and occasional applause led to the conclusion that many of the attendees were familiar with this from their own practice. Originally, Change Management had legitimate political goals, because it goes back to the social psychologist *Kurt Lewin*, who wanted to make adolescents who are not conspicuous in society fit for reintegration: By "unfreezing", they were to discard their socially problematic behaviour patterns and then become open to the acquisition of pro-social patterns, which were finally stabilised in a third phase. According to this three-step process of "unfreezing", "moving" and "stabilising", Change Management is still taking place today when it comes to manipulating people in the sense of propagated change.

The fact that subtle strategies are not always used in school life was proven by the subsequently read reports of teachers (a small selection of several hundred sent insights into forced adaptation). Their skepticism or even refusal in certain situations was answered with partly open, partly covert repression.

This was supported by the subsequent panel discussion with staff representatives: 70 years after the end of the Nazi dictatorship, training courses entitled "Leading and following" are once again becoming acceptable, "innovations" which in practice weaken the quality of education are being pushed through, partly under the influence of private economic interests, against the declared will of those affected and output-oriented school development operates with dreadful indicators, such as the cost of repairs to measure the success of social learning (!).

Manipulation in education

After lunch break, *Silja Graupe* (Professor of Philosophy and Economics at the Cusanus University in Bernkastel-Kues, which

she founded) deepened the statements of *Matthias Burchardt* on Change Management in her lecture on "Influencing and Manipulating in Education", showing that this was the result of a large-scale attempt to establish an economically compatible image of man. This process has already lasted for almost a hundred years and has been promoted by the cognitive sciences: Human thinking is divided into two systems: System 1, in which intuitive actions and unconscious patterns of interpretation are stored, and System 2, which is responsible for deliberate contemplation and power of judgement. According to Graupe, System 2 is being stigmatised as too heavy and sluggish because it prevents the implementation of innovations. Whoever strives for this, must therefore "edit" System 1 by "deleting" its contents and "overwriting" it anew. As Graupe proves, the strategies applied are in principle the same as for brainwashing, only less brutal, but guided by a "libertarian paternalism", as the Nobel laureate for economics, *Richard Taylor*, calls it. What is meant is a system of public manipulation in which an elite dictates the majority, for whom thinking is too burdensome, the desirable thinking patterns. This also begins with the "unfreezing" of System 1, i.e. the deletion of the patterns, social practices and self-images stored in it, in order to open up the people, who are infantilised by disorientation, to the new concepts of meaning, which are then to be stabilised by hammering in key terms and phrases. System 2, which could object, is paralysed by the occupation with meaningless, formal activities. Thus, Graupe concludes, a new concept is implemented namely that of the market as the universal valid principle of society. Silja Graupes' study on the representation of the market economy in current economics textbooks (<https://bildung-wissen.eu/fachbeitraege/beeinflussung-und-manipulation-in-der-oekonomischen-bildung.html>) is recommended for anyone who wants to know more precisely how this reductionist image of man is conveyed.

Democracy without education?

In his speech, *Volker Ladenthin* (Professor of Education at the University of Bonn) answered the question "Why democracy without education is not democratic – and education without democracy does not work well". He started out from a criticism of those responsible for the PISA study who with astonishing ease postulate a normative education concept primarily aimed at economic functionality, even though they are neither educators nor education politicians. This method of encroachment calls for a fundamental clarification of who is responsible for what in a democracy. Ladenthin argued that, in contrast to ancient and medieval philoso-

phy, modern scientific thinking is based on an open horizon of questions and an unfinished search for truth. Science has a constitutionally certified freedom and an exclusive responsibility concerning this search for truth. On the other hand, politics has only a limited time horizon in which to make decisions that cannot be deferred until questions of truth have been clarified. It is the task of democracy to organise this decision-making process in terms of the common good, and this in turn requires objectively informed and capable citizens, and thus education. So in Ladenthin's eyes, the facilitation of education is the supreme task of politics.

Against this backdrop, Ladenthin presented three examples to illustrate how this "division of labour" is actually being circumvented in education today by way of the curricula: unambiguous truths of educational goals, contents or methods are set as norms – a unique process in the history of democratic curricula which thus fell back into pre-modern thinking, as Ladenthin emphasised.

What is to be done?

Subsequent to these three critical lectures, which shed light on the ideology of Change Management from different perspectives, it was Jochen Krautz' task to answer the necessarily resulting question "What is to be done?" in his concluding lecture.

He did this taking recourse to ancient philosophy as his predecessor had done, namely falling back to *Aristotle's* definition of the *téchne* as an art theory based on knowledge, practice and experience. In this sense, pedagogy should also be understood as an art theory, in which technical and pedagogical knowledge, action patterns resulting from experience, and situational judgment had to be integrated. Based on this professionalism, it is the task and the responsibility of the teachers alone to ensure the quality of their teaching in social and pedagogical responsibility, and not according to external guidelines. Such guidelines – especially when their theoretical reasoning is contentious – are more likely to result in preventing the development of a professional art of teaching. In a word, Krautz pleaded in favour of taking teachers' educational autonomy seriously.

This resulted in a clear answer to the initial question. Under the conditions of a high professional ethic striving for perfection in technical as well as pedagogical regard, teachers have the right to resist pedagogically questionable attacks on their professionalism, and this is legally confirmed. The fact that they seldom do, Krautz attributed, among other things, to their

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not even fully appreciating their situation as "model inmates" in an ideologically constructed test laboratory, since the terms and concepts infiltrated by Change Management are often coupled up with pedagogical concepts that are positively connoted. In the end, Krautz set against this insidious deprofessionalisation a return to objectivity and thus to knowledge and judgment as well as sociality, that is to say the recollection of the pedagogical relationship of older and younger generations and of class

instruction as joint work on the common cause.

The concluding podium discussion of this inspiring conference made clear that resistance can be worthwhile and successful if different interest groups identify themselves with the same case, consistently seek the public and consistently make use of the possibilities of democratic opposition. In both panel discussions it was impressive to note how activists with very different motives and representatives of different associations pulled together in spite of these differences.

Source: <https://bildung-wissen.eu/veranstaltungen-1/gbw-tagungen-2018/tagungsbericht-time-for-change-wuppertal.html>

¹ The *Gesellschaft für Bildung und Wissen, GBW* (Society for Education and Knowledge), (<http://bildung-wissen.eu/>) was founded in June 2010 and examines critically the path taken towards the economisation of education and the levelling of qualifications since PISA and Bologna. The GBW warns against their risk potential for the German location for education and science. Members of the society can become anyone interested in education and knowledge – especially teachers in schools and colleges.

• (Translation *Current Concerns*)