

“A fateful friendship”

Toxic consequences of Europe’s dependence on the USA

Interview with Werner Rügemer,* Germany



Werner Rügemer
(Picture wikipedia)

(Edit.) Dr Werner Rügemer, a publicist from Germany, dedicates his professional work to exposing societal, political and social ills.

His latest book “Fateful Friendship. How the USA Conquered Europe”, is particularly explosive in view of the conflict in Ukraine, as the alignment of European policy,

and especially that of Germany, with the USA on this issue is unmistakable. For Switzerland, too, the question arises as to why it is so aligned with the USA in taking sides in Ukraine.

Following a discussion event organised by “Swiss Standpoint” in Frauenfeld, the editorial team had the opportunity to talk to Werner Rügemer about his latest book where he was able to explain his positions in more detail.

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Mr. Rügemer, you call yourself an “interventionist philosopher”. Can you explain what you mean by that?

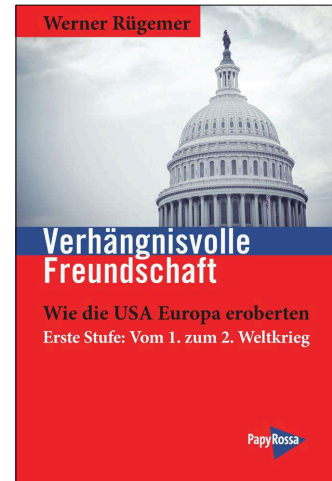
I studied at well-established German universities in the 1960s, in Munich, Tübingen and at the FU Berlin. Philosophy was about famous philosophers like Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Guardini, Hegel and of course the Greeks like Plato and Aristotle. That always seemed to me more like lofty conceptual jargon – it didn’t contribute at all to understand the reality in the Federal Republic at the time. Neither the pre-Socratics nor Confucius nor Marx were mentioned. Issues of wars and global underdevelopment could be heard, very vaguely from afar.

It slowly became clear to me: you don’t want to stay in this self-centred academic world that can’t and doesn’t want to explain the world around it. I then did a doctorate in philosophical anthropology alongside my job, at the then newly founded reform university in Bremen. However, I didn’t want to stay in the state-civil service and the privately funded academic business. Firstly, I wanted to understand the world and secondly to contribute to fighting against and overcoming the increasingly discernible injustices, the wars, the exploitations. That’s how I came to see myself as an interventionist philosopher.

Can you explain to us how you came to occupy yourself with the spectrum of social, political, and economic inequities?

An important clarification came with the transatlantic peace movement of the 1980s. Yet my major concern was not the specific issue of peace. At that time, the new, clean, modern technology of Silicon Valley was praised in the highest terms in Western Europe, and with it also in the Federal Republic. I felt that something was wrong!

In 1984, I travelled on my own initiative for six weeks to Silicon Valley, the promised new paradise between San Francisco, Mountain View, and San José. Through US peace activists and



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since 1989. He has since published a large number of articles as well as several books, including “Cross-Border Leasing” (2004), “Heuschrecken’ im öffentlichen Raum” (2008, 2012) and in English “The Capitalists of the 21st Century. An Easy-to-Understand Outline on the Rise of the New Financial Players”. Tredition 2019 as Paperback, Hardcover and E-Book ISBN 978-3-7497-1163-5.

through the black communist Angela Davis, I got in touch with scientists at the elite Stanford University, with trade unionists, engineers, lawyers, doctors, firemen. On the ground, I soon gained some surprising and clear insights: Illegal chip workers from Mexico and Vietnam were being exploited at rock-bottom wages and were getting sick. Groundwater was being contaminated by chemical waste from the chip production. Unions and peace groups were being mercilessly targeted. I met the already successful Steve Jobs, the founder of Apple: he was a convinced vegan and communitarian, praised his hierarchy-free company – but the exploitation of the sick, illegal female chip workers was a matter of course for him. The driving force was the military, for example the arms company *Lockheed*, which had been rising in Silicon Valley with the chips for its intercontinental missiles since the Second World War. In 1985, I published the book “New Technology. Old Society. Silicon Valley: Centre of New Technologies in the USA”.

In your latest book “Fateful Friendship. How the USA Conquered Europe” you address the relationship between the USA and Europe. Why do you see a problem in this relationship?

The leading banks and corporations of the USA, with the support of the US governments – whether led by Republicans or Democrats – have supported all fascist dictatorships in Europe since 1922, giving them credits, equipping them, promoting them as markets: *Mussolini, Salazar, Pilsudski, Franco, Hitler*, together against “the communist danger”.

Even after the Second World War, under US leadership in the Federal Republic of Germany and Western Europe, most Nazi collaborators, especially in banks and companies, were neither punished nor disentangled nor expropriated, not even the US war profiteers in the USA themselves – and by the way, no Aryanisations were taken back, they were not even part of the indictment at the Nuremberg Military Tribunal.

The USA promoted the political right-wing potential in the EU; the USA also got ex-NS accomplices from all over Eastern Europe, from Poland, Ukraine, etc. and kept them on hand for their propaganda stations like *Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe* and for later regime changes.

Our media and history books say that the USA liberated Europe, especially Germany, and ended

the Second World War. What do you say about that?

It was only a military liberation, and even then, only a partial one. For example, the Bundeswehr, the secret services, the judiciary, the banks, and companies of the newly founded Federal Republic of Germany were, as we know, still run by ex-Nazis.

And in the pincer grip of the *Marshall Plan* and NATO, the supreme sovereignty of Western Europe lay with the USA: militarily, economically, marketwise, culturally. With the eastward expansion after 1990, NATO membership had to be completed first in all cases under US pressure, and only then was the respective state allowed to become an EU member. In the process, oligarchs, right-wing, nationalist, even racist forces tended to be promoted as capable of governing, probably most directly in the former Yugoslavia. The national economies were impoverished, emigration and migrant labour were and are the result.

The USA, as I have historically presented in the book, has many enemies and no friends. According to its claim, the USA is the “only world power” – other states become “friends” depending on geopolitical opportunism, in flexible forms of dependency, and only for a time. In the Second World War, the Soviet Union was a friend, afterwards it immediately became the mortal enemy. It was similar with China, but also with liberation movements like the one in Vietnam, which was first supported against Japan, then fought as a mortal enemy.

After the Second World War, the capitalist states of Western Europe were supported, admittedly under US sovereignty and only for a limited time. Incidentally, as today, this friend was also the site for the US practice of a possible nuclear first strike.

After 1990, the USA then gradually devalued the Western European states and upgraded selected, right-wing Eastern European states such as Poland, Croatia as well as Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia and Ukraine politically and economically, also in the interests of an Eastern NATO.

The USA sees itself as the guarantor of democracy and a value-based order in the world. This is the basis for its claim to be the only world power. Is this justified?

Not at all. Even after the First World War, the USA did not join the League of Nations, which they

themselves had initiated. They supported fascist dictators in Latin America. In China, together with Hitler, they supported the dictator Generalissimo *Chiang Kaishek*, who overthrew the republic founded in 1912. I have already mentioned the European dictators.

After the Second World War, the USA co-founded the UN. Yet alongside this it operates its own “rules-based international order”, accompanied by a scant thousand military bases on all continents and annexed territories. Thus, when necessary, they violate the UN Charter with a self-made “coalition of the willing”, organise coups and wars, including proxy wars.

With its geopolitics of constantly modernised slave labour, the US state, founded as a slave state, organises the most extreme low-wage labour in impoverished states around the world and violates all labour and social rights as stated in the human rights of the UN and the *International Labour Organisation* (ILO).

For a long time, but especially in the current Ukraine-Russia conflict, one has the impression that Germany is aligning its policy entirely with Washington’s wishes. Do you have an explanation for this?

After the Second World War, the Federal Republic of Germany was initially founded as a separate state under pressure from the USA. With the help of the unpunished Nazi profiteers, the USA was able to build up the Federal Republic as the main economic, military, and ideological bastion in Europe, still against “the communist danger”. This was started with the “Christian” founding chancellor *Adenauer* and deepened with the “Christian” long-term chancellor *Merkel* – for example, no other European state wanted to take in the USA’s new Africa surveillance centre AFRICOM, but *Merkel* let AFRICOM into Germany.

And since the early 2000s, the US has not only operated branches of its banks and corporations in Germany, as before. Rather, US investors have since bought up thousands of the most profitable companies. *BlackRock*, *Vanguard & Co.* are now the leading shareholder groups in most major companies, including the DAX, energy, pharmaceuticals, housing, services, while the smaller private equity investors like *KKR*, *Blackstone & Co.* are buying up and “restructuring” the successful *Mittelstand*.

For example, 9 of the 10 leading shareholders of the largest “German” arms company, *Rhein-*

metall, are based in the USA, which of course includes *BlackRock*. And *BlackRock*, *Vanguard & Co.* are also the leading shareholders in the US fracking industry, whose expensive and extremely polluting fracking gas is now bought by Germany as a matter of course and self-destructively.

Is there an alternative to Germany’s and Europe’s dependence on the USA? What is your advice to politicians who want to pursue an independent policy oriented towards the interests of their own country and Europe?

Yes, the US dominance established for Germany also applies, with a few exceptions, to the EU and the EU states. US lobbyists dominate in Brussels. *BlackRock* advises not only the *Federal Reserve* in the US, but also the *European Central Bank* and the EU Commission on the *European Green Deal*.

My advice applies not only to politicians, but also to entrepreneurs, craftsmen, the self-employed, trade unionists, citizens’ initiatives, who must become active themselves, if necessary, against “their” politicians and governments. Some EU states are already deviating from the US-affiliated EU Commission in some areas.

The EU states must return to the UN Charter, away from the US-defined “rules-based international order”. The “European sovereignty” invoked by the German and French governments is only possible without US-led NATO.

European states must also return to the human rights based labour and social rights of the UN and the ILO. For example: US ideologues and their European imitators propagate the free choice of sex, but the US has not yet ratified the UN human right to equal pay for men and women for equal work. Leading US corporations like *Apple*, *Microsoft*, *Amazon*, *Facebook*, *Google* and *Uber* also exploit millions of people and especially women worldwide through their suppliers at low wages and dangerous, ill-making working conditions – and remain doggedly silent about it.

And the subsidies that are now being granted for innovations in Europe must be given to their own, also newly founded companies, not, for example, as now in Germany, to Silicon Valley corporations like *Intel* or *TSMC* from Taiwan, where, incidentally, *BlackRock & Co.* are the leading shareholders everywhere, make the strategic decisions and transfer the profits to the USA.

From Africa, Asia, and Latin America, one hears more and more critical voices also against US domination. There is talk of a new multicultural world order. What could your new book contribute to this situation?

These voices are not new. After the Second World War, there was the G77 movement in the states liberating themselves from colonialism, or from US domination like China: so, many states from Africa, Asia and Latin America had joined forces inside and outside the UN. But the capitalist West under US leadership destroyed this independent, democratic, economic development. Incidentally, Switzerland was not uninvolved in this, for example in the circumvention of sanctions against the apartheid state of South Africa as well as for the corruption of Western-friendly dictators and oligarchs.

What the G77 started was taken up again with more experience, led by developing states that have become more powerful, above all with the help of the People's Republic of China. To

this end, these states have already formed various formats for a good decade, SCO in Asia, CELAC in Latin America, FOCAC in Africa, 1+16 in the EU, and above all BRICS with Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Multipolarity, a return to the UN Charter, independent economies, human labour and social rights – these are among the goals. Europeans must get involved in this worldwide, multifaceted cooperation.

For my part, I am in the process of establishing such a cooperation with other authors, so far especially in the USA, France, and China. What if that were also possible in Switzerland? The book should help to reconstruct the real history of the last hundred years in a cooperative process against previous professional legends and to draw the consequences.

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

Werner Rügemeier: «Verhängnisvolle Freundschaft. Wie die USA Europa eroberten.» I. Phase: Vom 1. zum 2. Weltkrieg. Papyrossa Verlag Köln 2023, 326 pages, 23,90 Euro