

CREDO

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Power

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There was once a time when he was the leader of a super-power and opened up the Iron Curtain. Today he's regarded at best as a tragic hero.

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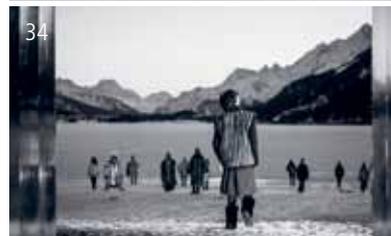
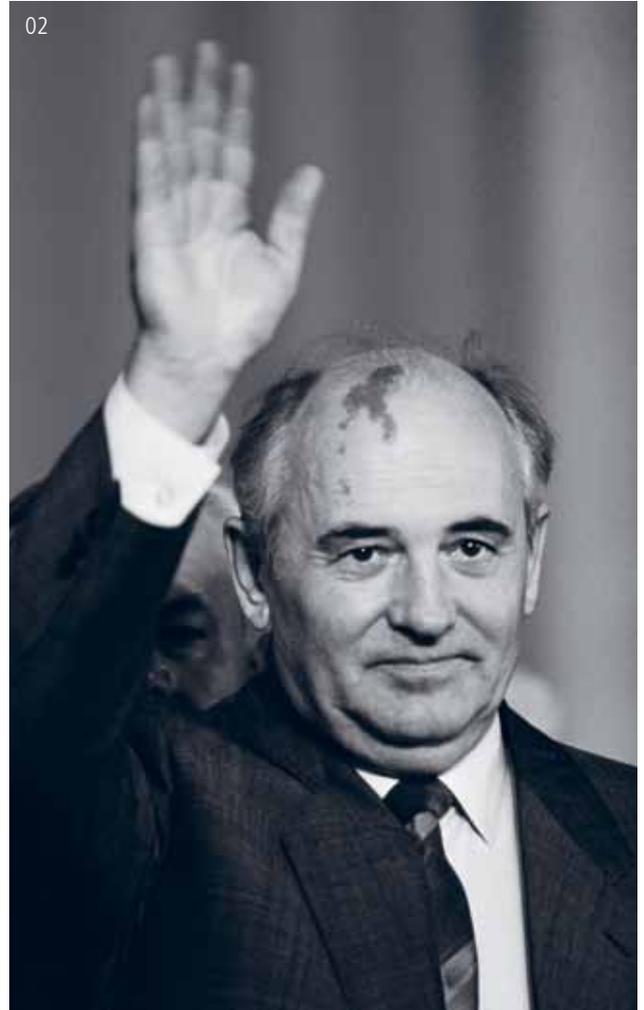
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Dear Readers,

Power is a many-sided phenomenon. We can condemn it, we can be addicted to it, we can win it, and we can lose it just as quickly. If we look at it quite impartially, then we can see that it's indispensable if we want to reach our goals. But there are moral and ethical questions to answer when power is used to attain the wrong goals, and when it is misused. That is why power has to be controlled and limited. And that is why people in power have to act responsibly.

In this issue of CREDO, the Hungarian author György Dalos depicts the former Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev as a tragic hero. At the high point of his power, Gorbachev brought about political change in the Eastern Bloc – change that ultimately turned against him. In our interview we talk with the management consultant Gabriele Euchner. She has interviewed executives who've been fired and thus felt the full brunt of their own bosses' power – and she has written a moving book about it. Crown and regalia adorn King Bansah from Ghana, but in order to fulfill his office as leader of the Ewe people of Gbi from his home in Ludwigshafen in Germany he uses fax and Skype. “We Africans can switch back and forth easily,” he explains to the reporter Margrit Sprecher when she visits him in his auto repair shop. Power can also unfold in the arts, as Giovanni Netzer relates. He is the director of the Origen Festival of Culture in Riom in the canton of the Grisons, and one of the most imaginative personalities on the Swiss cultural scene.

I wish you a fascinating reading experience!



H.S.H. Prince Philipp von und zu Liechtenstein
Chairman LGT



Under the spell of power

Text: **György Dalos**

With his calls for perestroika, glasnost and a new way of thinking, Mikhail Gorbachev had a decisive impact on world events. The western world has remained fascinated by this pioneer of democratic processes in the former Eastern Bloc. But in his own country he has many enemies, who to the present day still blame him for the collapse of the Soviet empire. The prize-winning Hungarian author György Dalos offers a portrait of Mikhail Gorbachev in semi-closeup.

Assessing the achievements of a politician – judging just how much he was a success or a failure – confronts the historian with a major difficulty in the case of Mikhail Gorbachev. When the then 54-year-old Gorbachev was elected General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March 1985, he found himself at the helm of a superpower that was in military terms very much the equal of the USA, and whose achievements in culture and science enjoyed worldwide recognition, indeed admiration. Even the CIA reports commissioned by the White House were complimentary: “According to the most modern standards, the Soviet Union is a very stable country.”

When Gorbachev announced his resignation six years later, the multiethnic Soviet Union had collapsed beyond repair. The Warsaw Pact had been dissolved, and “real socialism” had imploded. Many enemies of the “father of perestroika” blame him to this day for this catastrophic process. It was the result of his alleged inability, his weakness or even his “betrayal,” they say.

Others, especially his western adherents, celebrate him as the statesman who destroyed the “evil empire”: the man who gave freedom back to the peoples of Eastern Europe, and who not least made German reunification possible. Both perspectives fail to consider the real issues.

“We can’t carry on like this”

Viewed objectively, perestroika originally had a dual intention. The first was to curtail the arms race, which was at an economically unsustainable level; the second was to withdraw from the military conflict zones on different continents, from Ethiopia to Afghanistan, that had also become immensely expensive. The Soviet Union was keen to reach a modus vivendi with the West in order to procure from it the technology that was necessary to crank up its own stagnating, ailing economy. In parallel to this, the state leadership wanted to make its system of government more modern and more transparent, and to defuse potential national and social tensions. Companies and line ministries



April 3, 1989, Cuba: During Mikhail Gorbachev’s three-day visit, he and Fidel Castro signed a friendship treaty. But relations between the two countries had already cooled.

were to be given greater independence, and bureaucratic pressure was to be eased on the cultural scene and on the general public. The short-term agenda included battles against the corruption that had been fostered by shortages and mismanagement, and against the alcoholism that had in the meantime become widespread.

In ideological terms, the leadership of both party and state retained the Leninist orthodoxy. Not even a renewed critical engagement with Stalinism was on the order of the day. Moreover, the personality of the new boss in the Kremlin had been molded by his decades of activity within the Soviet party machine. What was new about his arrival on the scene, however, was the realization shared by many at the time – especially younger functionaries and intellectuals – that “we can’t carry on like this.” There was also a new determination to clean out the Augean stables that the stagnation of the Brezhnev era had left behind.

First successes

Gorbachev’s first successes came in international politics. He clearly understood that his initial meeting with US President Ronald Reagan in Geneva in autumn 1985 – at which neither side could expect any kind of breakthrough in the disarmament negotiations – would be a media event first and foremost. What played out on stage was in this case more important than what happened out of sight in the wings. Gorbachev had the advantage of being a newcomer – like a fresh-faced amateur actor appearing unexpectedly alongside an aging movie star on the decline. Instead of all the self-satisfied, stony-faced, immobile Soviet apparatchiks there now arrived out of the blue a human being with lively facial expressions and body language, a disarming smile and the famous birthmark on his forehead. Here was an approachable statesman. Furthermore, he was accompanied on his travels by his charming wife Raissa, who came across as wholly uncontrived alongside the other, slick first ladies. No PR expert could ever have invented anything more effective.

Resistance

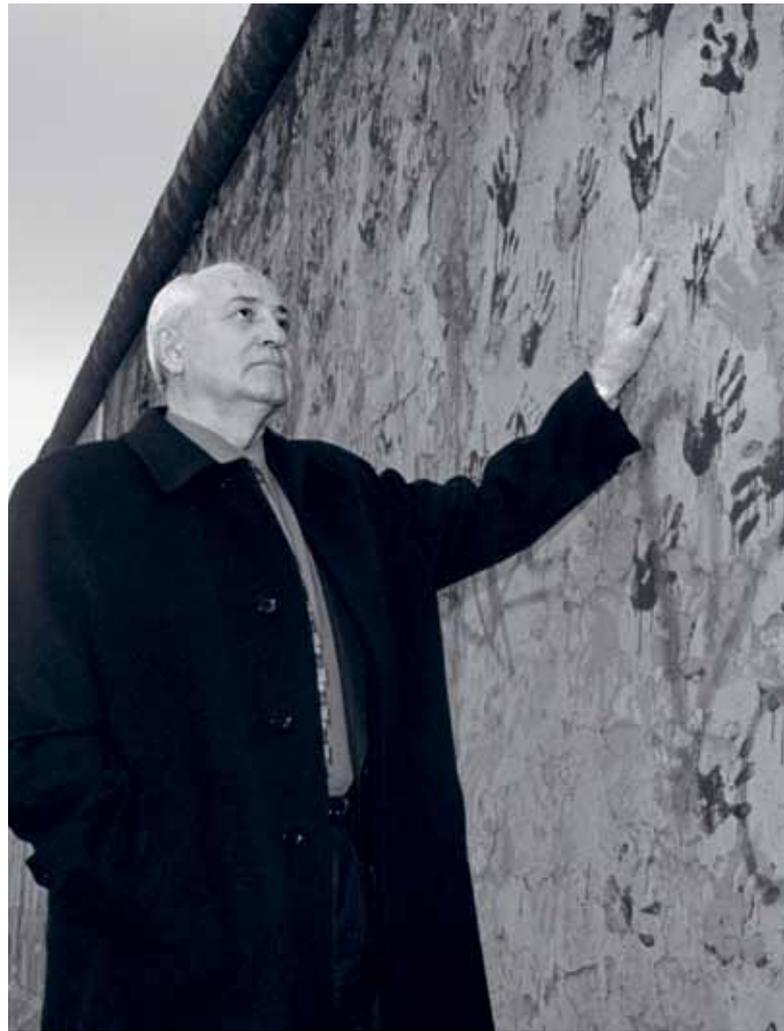
The ancient wisdom that no man is a prophet in his own land was also fatally confirmed, however, when Gorbachev fell. His campaign against the drinking habits of his countrymen – which in itself was well-founded – failed above all because he had followed the age-old Soviet modus operandi of making purely administrative decisions without asking those affected about their reasons – in this case, the country’s alcoholics. His declaration of war on cronyism in Kazakhstan unexpectedly came up against nationalist resistance. Even Gorbachev’s foreign travels became a matter of suspicion. This was hardly surprising in a country



May 31, 1988, Moscow: US President Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev. The next day, they ratified the INF Treaty that was a first, decisive step on the way to ending the Cold War.



1990: Mikhail Gorbachev looks at the cover of "Time" Magazine for January 1, 1990. The American weekly had chosen him as "Man of the Decade."



May 1, 1998, Berlin: Mikhail Gorbachev at the Berlin Wall. He had played a major role in bringing it down.

that had systematically restricted its citizens' mobility and freedom to travel since the end of the Tsarist empire in 1917. Before anyone was allowed to travel, they had to undergo a humiliating process that involved jumping through all kinds of bureaucratic hoops.

It's difficult to pinpoint the moment in history when Gorbachev's plans to improve the system shifted into trying to cope with new crises. The turning point might well have been the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster on April 26, 1986. When the reactor in block 4 exploded, it caused a "maximum credible incident" not just at the power plant, but also, metaphorically speaking, in the Soviet communications system. Information filtered through late and piecemeal, which merely increased the number of victims and made rescue measures more difficult. And it was not just the people who were given false information,

for the same was true of the men in power. Just before the catastrophic accident, for example, the atomic energy expert Anatoly Alexandrov had assured General Secretary Gorbachev "that we could install an RMBK reactor in the middle of Red Square, as they were no more dangerous than a samovar." Gorbachev's initial reaction to the incident was hesitant and skeptical, but he gradually understood that the secretiveness of the Soviet apparatus was worth nothing in an era of spy satellites. And in his battle for a new openness – glasnost – the only possible allies he found were among the scientists, artists and journalists of the intelligentsia.

New ways of thinking and acting

Gorbachev sent a clear signal in this respect when he made a telephone call to the nuclear physicist and human rights activist Andrei Sakharov, who had been arrested in January 1980 and



"For almost fifty years Raisa and I were together, at each other's side, and we never felt it to be a burden. On the contrary, we felt good being together. We loved each other, although we never spoke about it much when we were alone." Diary entry of Mikhail Gorbachev, September 21, 2000.

banished to the city of Gorki. He was now permitted to return to Moscow without any preconditions – a statesmanlike act that allowed Gorbachev to set a new course with regard to human rights. In the years thereafter, censorship was eased significantly. Books that had been banned for decades could now be published, like Boris Pasternak's "Doctor Zhivago." An exemplary "democracy of opinions" came about – perhaps the liveliest in the world at the time, primarily thanks to the Moscow press.

The word, once set free, was soon followed by action. Innumerable "informal groups" sprang up – organizations rather like clubs or parties that initially existed in the gray zone situated between what was allowed and what was forbidden. They articulated interests that had previously been unrepresented in the public sphere, and they increasingly used street demonstrations to express their opinions. The pluralism that arose was a harbinger

of the first semi-free elections of March 1989 that resulted in the Congress of People's Deputies. Parallel to this, private initiatives sprang up in the agricultural and business sectors: small islands amidst a bureaucratically organized economy. All in all, these changes within the old system offered a new model of reformable socialism such as Mikhail Gorbachev had envisaged at the time. His hitherto somewhat unstructured policy ideas at home and abroad coalesced more and more into a "new way of thinking."

Gorbachev's lasting historical achievements include his engagement with the Stalinist past. To this purpose, he instituted a commission that studied mountains of yellowing files about the Terror of the 1930s, '40s and '50s and that published a preliminary closing report as harrowing as it was humane and impressive: "The honorable name and dignity is given back to

thousands of untainted people; the heavy burden of unfounded accusations and suspicion is taken from them. Up to now, 1 002 617 criminal cases of a repressive nature have been checked that affect a total of 1 586 104 people. Of these cases, 1 354 902 people have been rehabilitated.”

One of Gorbachev’s most courageous ideas was the shift in the relationship between the USSR and its allies. As early as 1986 he had told the Politburo: “Things cannot continue as they were ... We cannot use administrative methods to lead our friends ... Basically, we don’t need to lead them at all – that can

only mean having problems with them.” He did not announce this decision to the world, but nevertheless acted accordingly. He had no intention of saving the doddering leaders of the Eastern Bloc who were incapable of reforming, and he took no steps against the citizens’ movements that formed in eastern and southern Europe. The logical climax of this tactic came about with the abandonment of the Berlin Wall and, above all, in the breathtaking preparations for German reunification. “Our society,” he said in a melancholy summary of the situation, given to his closest colleagues in January 1990, “will react painfully to the loss of the GDR and even more so to its being



After the attempted putsch of August 19-21, 1991, Moscow: Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin, President of the Russian Republic.

swallowed up by West Germany ... Our people's consciousness will have to bear a severe trauma. But there is no other possibility and we have to survive this, too."

A tragic hero

Gorbachev's reforms very neatly fulfilled what Niccolò Machiavelli had once claimed: "It ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things." Gorbachev also had to apply his extraordinary energies increasingly to solving unforeseeable problems. Clearly, the country he had inherited from his predecessors was all too fragile, highly vulnerable and already in a state of profound disintegration. Every banal stroke of bad luck could have tragic consequences.

A reduction in the world price of crude oil – the Soviet Union's most important export – had a seriously negative impact on the economy. Loosening the bureaucratic controls brought about disruptions in the production of goods, and the resultant supply problems and empty food shops worsened the mood in society. Nationalist conflicts broke out, some of them bloody, and they proved disastrous – these included the territorial disputes in the Caucasus that are still ongoing today. One direct result of the dissolution of the Eastern Bloc was a more pronounced drive for autonomy and state sovereignty in the individual Soviet republics. Ultimately, the process of glasnost and democracy that Gorbachev had initiated now turned against him. Hostility toward him grew ever more vehement, both among the radical democrats and among the conservative apparatchiks in his own circle.

The fall

Gorbachev's political life after 1989 was restricted to maneuvering, making compromises and fending off attacks. His concern was no longer to retain the Party's monopoly of power, nor to uphold communism itself, but solely to keep the Union together. While he was on vacation in the Crimea in August 1991 he was toppled by a putsch in which his closest colleagues participated. Although he was able to return to Moscow after several days, together with his wife Raissa – who was suffering from shock – he only had three months left as head of state: three months in which he was bereft of all power.

The top-level politicians in league with Gorbachev's archrival Boris Yeltsin dissolved the USSR's founding treaty of 1922 in Belovezh in Belarus. They did so behind Gorbachev's back, and Gorbachev resigned soon afterwards, on December 25, 1991. His

path from office to grandeur began with a simple gesture: pressing the button in the elevator of his two-story residence in the Kremlin. After leaving the building with the General Secretary's Cabinet Room, its Conference Chamber and Walnut Room, he looked out onto Moscow in mid-winter, and already belonged to posterity.

Posterity is either grateful or ungrateful, but is generally forgetful. Today, hardly anyone still talks of the man who at the end of the previous century did more than any other head of state to change the image of the Soviet Union, of Eastern Europe, indeed of the whole world at the time. He did so by creating more peace, more freedom and more justice, despite all the setbacks he endured. ♦



November 29, 2005, Leipzig: Mikhail Gorbachev during a press conference at the Women's World Awards.

György Dalos, born in 1943 in Budapest, studied history from 1962 to 1967 at Moscow University. In 1977 he was a co-founder of the democratic opposition group in Hungary. From 1984 onwards he lived and worked in Berlin, Bremen, Vienna, Budapest and Cologne. From 1995 to 1999 Dalos ran the Hungarian Cultural Institute in Berlin, a city that has now become the center of his life and where he works as a journalist and freelance author. He has been awarded numerous prizes. György Dalos's oeuvre includes the following books: "Der Vorhang geht auf. Das Ende der Diktaturen in Osteuropa" and "Gorbatschow. Mensch und Macht" ("The curtain rises. The end of the dictatorships in Eastern Europe" and "Gorbachev. Man and power," 2009 and 2012 respectively).

Power needs



The coronation mantle

In the Holy Roman Empire, placing the coronation mantle on the emperor or king confirmed his duty to protect the faith and the peace. Only after this did he receive further insignia such as the crown, orb and scepter. This coronation mantle from the 12th century was made by the royal court workshop in Palermo. Its decoration, and the crafts employed in making it, reflect the ethnic and religious diversity found among the people of Sicily. Further ornamentation was added at a later date. This mantle was used at the coronations of most of the Holy Roman Emperors from the 13th century onwards, up to the end of the ancien régime. Today it is exhibited in the Secular Treasury in the Hofburg in Vienna.



The uraeus

When threatened, the uraeus snake can raise its head up to 24 inches off the ground and extend a hood like the cobra. Its poison is a highly effective neurotoxin. According to mythology, the uraeus was the fire-spitting eye of the sun god Ra, and it served as a symbol protecting the gods and pharaohs of ancient Egypt. It was one of the insignia of the pharaohs' earthly power, along with the flail, crook and scepter. In order to avoid having to submit to her enemy Octavian, legend says that the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra committed suicide by means of the bite of a uraeus.



The signet ring

Signet rings were worn in Egypt from as early as 2000 B.C. Since their seal confirmed the authenticity of documents, they symbolized power and authority. Signet rings were mostly made of gold, silver, bronze or copper. The Pope wears a special form of signet ring: the Fisherman's Ring, which has been the official ring of the Popes since the 14th century, and until 1843 was used to seal papal documents. The Fisherman's Ring is given to a new Pope several days after his election, during the course of his papal inauguration. After his death it is shattered with a silver hammer. When Pope Benedict XVI abdicated, a different course of action was chosen to invalidate the Ring, and two deep cuts were made across the face of it.

signs

Monarchs need the insignia of rank such as the crown, the orb and the scepter. In democracies, the state limousine is a vehicle that signifies power. These signs of power may vary, but they remain indispensable.

Text: **Manfred Schiefer**



The Beast

Whoever gets a company car with a chauffeur has arrived at the top. And if you're right at the very top, then you get a company car weighing several tons with over 1000 horsepower, replete with gas masks and blood reserves. But we naturally don't know which of the many myths are really true about US President Barack Obama's official car. What's certain is that its mighty proportions have given it its nickname: The Beast. Despite all its security technology, it seems that it's by no means invulnerable. The press reported in 2011 that The Beast had driven awkwardly over the ramp by the gates of the US embassy in Dublin: it got snagged on it, then got stuck. The Secret Service corrected these reports, saying that it was "a spare limo, carrying staff and support personnel." But of course, the truth never stands in the way of a good story.



The helmet

The oldest helmets that have been preserved date from the third millennium B.C. and were used as protection on the battlefield. The Sumerians used simple bronze helmets with ear protectors. Helmets were not just used for protection, for they also signaled the status of the wearer. Members of the upper classes are said to have worn helmets made of gold. Today, helmets have long been used by everyone in their leisure time – though not to convey any sense of power, but instead to display the style consciousness of the city cyclist or the daring of the mountain climber.



The throne

The throne is one of the best-known examples of insignia, and not just in the western world. The thrones studded with glass beads from Cameroon are particularly beautiful. In 1908, King Njoya of the Bamun gave his throne to Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany as a birthday gift. Today, experts regard this gift as looted art. In a situation where power lies clearly with the colonial master, then even the peaceful exchange of objects becomes problematic. Often it is a matter of back-door theft, extortion or looting. Massive political pressure is believed to have compelled King Njoya to have made the gift. However, today's Sultan of Bamun said several years ago that the throne may remain in Berlin, where it is displayed today in the Ethnological Museum. His stance is not shared by critics in Cameroon, however. ♦



The esthetic of suspicion

Text: **Daniele Muscionico**

Using generally available sources, Mark Lombardi researched the interrelations of politics, business and organized crime in order to display them as underlying power structures and conspiratorial networks. His early death itself is the stuff of conspiracy theories.

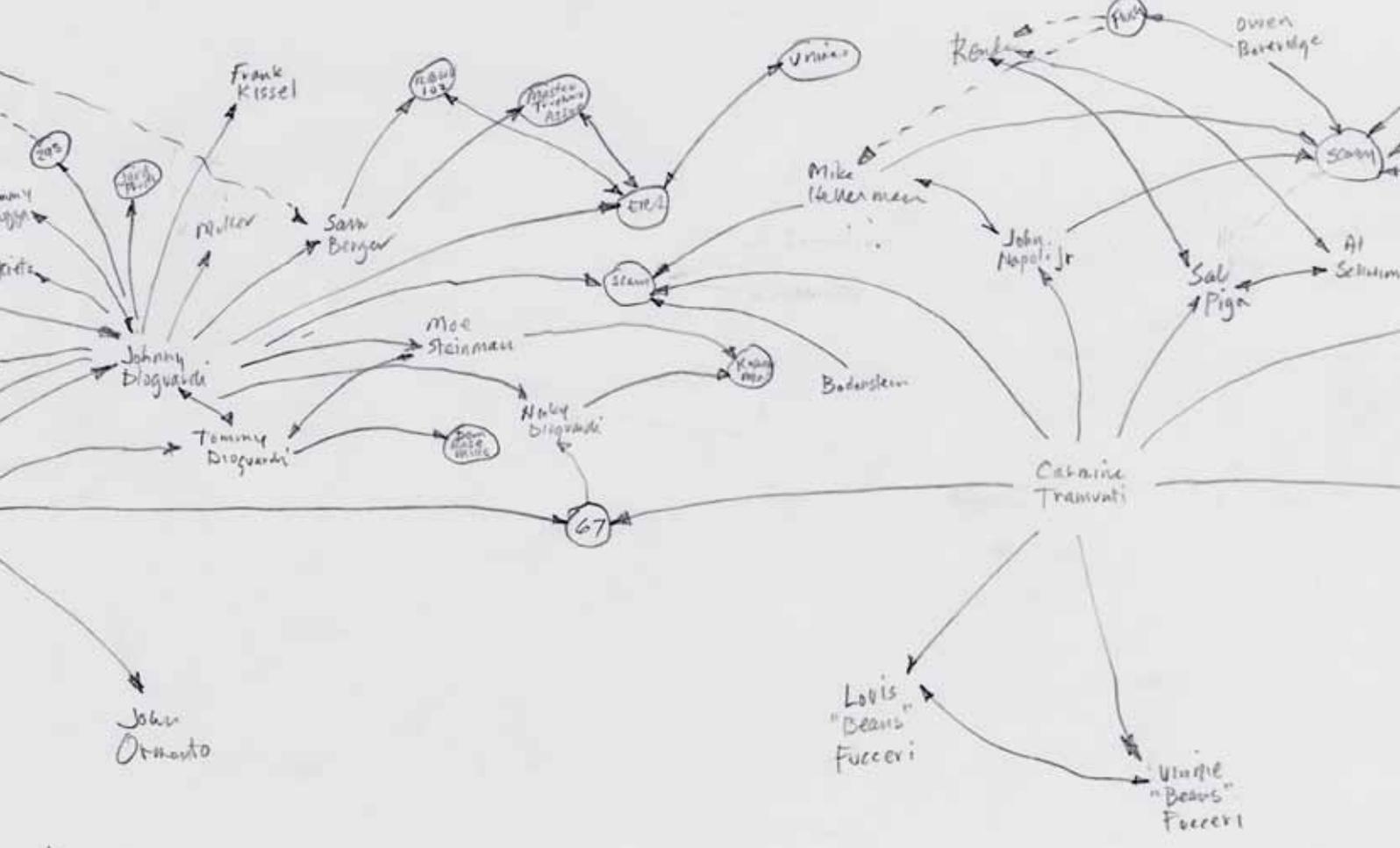
He was obsessive. Crazy. Was he paranoid? We'd sleep more soundly if he were. But that would be too simple. Because Mark Lombardi set himself the task of understanding and depicting the hidden axes of power. And he rarely slept soundly. He took his life at precisely the moment when he was having the biggest impact. Or was he murdered instead? What's beyond doubt is that on March 22, 2000, a few months after his breakthrough as an artist and his phenomenally successful exhibition at the New York gallery MoMa PS1 he was found dead in his studio. Hanged. The police assumed it was suicide. His friends doubt it. Not least because they believe that Mark Lombardi was being shadowed by the FBI.

And that wasn't just since he had been busy with his biggest artwork to date. Its content was to be what the "Sunday Times" of London called "the biggest financial scandal of the century," carried out by the "world bank of crime," the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, BCCI for short. It became

a monster-sized drawing, nearly twelve feet wide and five feet high. This work of art, entitled "BCCI-ICIC & FAB, 1972-1991 (4th Version)," was drawn between 1996 and 2000 and shows the links between the bin Laden family and the American banking system. Lombardi here brings together in a single diagram the shadowy realm that led to 9/11 – and this was not just what the art critics said, but corruption investigators too. Yet by the time they had voiced their opinions, the artist was already dead.

"Narrative structures" are what Lombardi called his works of art. His business card read: "Death-Defying Acts Of Art And Conspiracy." He wanted to get people to change the world, said the art historian Robert Hobbs – the man who probably knew him best.

Lombardi's life began uneventfully. He was born in 1951 in Syracuse, New York. He studied art history, made several attempts to become an artist – all of which failed – and worked as an assistant to the Director of the Contemporary Arts Museum



Untitled Chicago Outfit Study (Tommy Lucchese), date unknown, graphite on paper, 14 x 80 inches.
 Starting with Al Capone, this work shows the Pan-American myth of the mafia and its connections to politics and business.

in Houston. He opened his own gallery. We know that he had a passion for reading literature of a conspiratorial bent, and we also know that he had an obsession with consolidating information in sprawling structures.

Lombardi read books by investigative journalists and delved into the Watergate affair. In the cinema, he watched movies about paranoia and Francis Ford Coppola’s “Godfather.” He wanted to understand the structures of power. And he was patient. Lombardi wrote what he knew on little cards and began to file them in index boxes. By the time he died he had a total of 14 500 cards. He took the names of the key people and traced their relationships with each other.

He could have used his information for newspaper articles or to write a book. But in 1994, during a phone call with a lawyer, he began to doodle on a napkin about what the lawyer was telling him. It was a crucial experience. From now on he wanted to

depict his knowledge in a cartography of power. He would link names using circles, arrows and lines, and illustrate connections with axes. His work would be based on facts about business, political entanglements, conspiracies and organized crime. His diagrams would show who influenced political decisions, and how. Arrows and lines signifying (financial) transactions and instances of influence or control were consolidated into a gigantic “esthetic of suspicion.” His works, such as “Untitled Chicago Outfit Study (Tommy Lucchese),” can be described as epic tableaux about how the underworld, politics and business are all entangled in a network of power. Guilt, corruption and fear here meet the beauty of art. When Lombardi was discovered hanged, they said there was a bottle of champagne at his feet. ♦

Daniele Muscionico was the editor for theater and photography at the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung.” Since 2009 she has worked as a freelance journalist and columnist for newspapers and magazines such as “Die Zeit,” the “Neue Zürcher Zeitung,” the “Tages-Anzeiger” and the “Weltwoche.”

“We sense exactly who’s
the alpha leader of the pack”



The management consultant Gabriele Euchner is convinced that most bosses are too little aware of their power. In her conversations with executives she has come across drastic cases of dismissals in top-level management.

CREDO: Ms. Euchner, how do top managers deal with power?

Gabriele Euchner: In very different ways. I've experienced just about every possible character type – from bosses who approach their employees on an equal footing, to those who quite clearly show them who's the boss.

Alpha leaders?

They're all alpha leaders. No one gets that far up on the career ladder without being an alpha leader. But there are different management styles. With some bosses, the team also has a say in things. But the power-seekers say: This is how it'll be done, there'll be no discussion.

What's better?

There's no right and wrong here. Companies that are led by power-hungry individuals can certainly enjoy great success. Often these are big corporations that need very power-conscious people at the top.

And what about other companies?

At the beginning of my career I worked at the German branch of an international group whose executive director and general manager was an engineer. He had a very motivating style of leadership. In our meetings he used to say: "Listen, guys, I don't have a clue about marketing, and I don't have a clue about sales. If you think you have a good idea, then put it into practice!"

Did that work?

Yes. We were very successful. He put his trust in us and he had respect for our abilities. That meant we redoubled our efforts. A team can feel when it's being given responsibility and then it identifies itself even more strongly with the company.

Today things seem more dominated by a control mania and by micromanagement. I cannot imagine that there are still bosses around who say: "I can't understand any of it. So just go ahead and do it."

It was truly courageous. But he knew intuitively that he could encourage his team with this style of management. And we were extremely motivated! Today, trust is absent in many places – out of fear that it might be misused. Again, I can understand this, because like many others, I too have had to go through negative experiences.

How do you learn to deal with power?

Well, not at a university, to be sure. As far as I know there aren't any practical workshops on the topic of "dealing with power." It's your bosses who were and remain the deciding factor. They are the role models for every manager who's climbing the career ladder. You usually learn how to deal with power from your bosses.

Is that a good method?

No. Learning how to lead like this remains a matter of luck. That surely can't be how a company wants to organize its personnel strategy. In my experience, management thinks too little about the impact of power. I would recommend all senior managers to reflect on their own patterns of behavior. The more we are aware of our own thoughts, emotions, prejudices and behavior patterns, and the more we act accordingly, the more successful we will be as leaders. Self-reflection and self-management are the decisive concepts for executives who deal successfully with power.

Do women deal with power differently from men?

No, just like with men there are positive and negative examples. I have experienced women in management positions who behaved in an extremely dominant manner. On the one hand this might correspond to their personality, but on the other hand they might well believe that this is how they must behave in order to be respected.

You yourself worked in a very high-ranking position with the cosmetic group Mary Kay. As Country Manager you were responsible for several countries. Did you enjoy your power?

I really couldn't use the word "enjoy." I was less concerned with power than with developing, deciding and implementing things. I'm a doer. I understand "power" in the sense of: I can do something. That's very important to me. In my everyday professional life, however, I was largely directed by others.

Directed by others?

As a CEO you're not always the master of your own agenda. You have a ten or twelve-hour day, packed with appointments and meetings. Everyone needs something, everyone wants something. There are enough employees and managers who like to delegate their own responsibilities upwards. Only very few of them make independent decisions in their own area and really take the reins in their own hands.

How far does an executive's or a manager's power extend?

It's limited. Almost all managers are in a sandwich position. They are pressurized from below by their employees and from above by the need to achieve goals. They're caught in the middle. They maneuver around and try to get the best out of things.

Unless they're right at the top.

There's always someone further up. And if you're the top boss, then it's the board of directors putting you under pressure.

In your new book you depict a typical scenario: the CEO fires a manager in order to relieve pressure on himself.

That really happens. If a CEO gets in the line of fire, he or she has to act. If he dismisses the manager of an area that's not running so well, he can normally clear some space for himself for a maximum of 18 months. Six months to find a replacement, six months for the new guy to settle into the job, and then after another six months the new guy has to be performing. If that doesn't work, then the CEO can change the manager yet again, but by at least the third time he'll have to bear the consequences himself. These are the rules of the game that are applied in many companies.

Are people also fired as a sheer demonstration of power?

Sometimes there are cockfights. An employee wants to provoke conflict and constantly holds a dissenting opinion. You try and accommodate him, but he still holds out. If that continues for a longer period of time, and if it occurs in the presence of others, then at some point you have to crack down on things so that it's clear to everyone who makes the decisions. Working in a company



is similar to how wolves behave in a pack. The unspoken laws and behavior patterns are comparable. We sense exactly who has what role and who's the alpha leader of the pack.

So in this case, firing him would be appropriate.

Yes, or a transfer. What's important is to maintain calm and return the focus to the work. Otherwise, soon all hell will break loose in the company.

When is the limit reached?

With me, it's after the third serious incident. I've had employees give me false information intentionally, in the hope of damaging me and ultimately the company too. You get that as well – bullying from below!

How should a boss deal with bullying among employees?

The most important task of an executive is to put together the right team, bit by bit. That allows him to have a decisive influence on the culture of a company. Bullying then becomes less likely to occur. Regrettably, some senior managers simply let it happen, believing that it will separate the wheat from the chaff. But that's a misconception, because in the end it's the company that loses out, and the employees with the negative character traits are the ones who win.



Getting fired – a taboo topic

No one likes to talk about how managers get fired and what this does to those affected. In her book "Kicked out of the Executive Suite." (Haufe Lexware, 2013), Gabriele Euchner sheds light on this sensitive topic. She has spoken to managers about their experiences and shows how

people can emerge stronger from the shock of being fired, and make their way back into business life with self-confidence. This book is a plea for more respect and a culture of appreciative communication before, during and after the employment termination meeting.

Gabriele Euchner: "I hope that managers and companies in future will be open, humane and fair when dealing with the topic of dismissal. I hope that getting dismissed will stop being a taboo and a stigma in our society and that it can also be regarded as something positive. Because getting fired doesn't mean the end of the world. It's always the beginning of something new, something better."

When reading your book, I was astonished at the things that take place in some companies. You describe crass cases of executives being fired. Did these things really happen like this?

Yes. I've made nothing up. I just interviewed a lot of top managers from different fields, different companies and different countries in Europe. Often, I was shocked too. I was more than horrified. Such as the case of an executive board member who was with the company for 20 years. He was fired by his boss – a friend of many years' standing. His boss said to him: "You know, Thomas, we've decided to let you go. I'm sure you know why. You can discuss all the other details with the head of personnel." The whole thing didn't even last a minute.

And what was the reason for him being fired?

The man in question still doesn't know, down to this day. It's one of the worst things – not being given a reason. You immediately ask yourself what you've done wrong. You feel like you've been trampled all over, left out in the cold. They just spit you out.

Often, managers have to clean out their desk immediately after they're fired. They're escorted off the premises by the security guards. Why?

Because you want to prevent the employee from going back into the company and stealing confidential data. I've known cases where people who've been fired have carried on working for a while, but they made the working atmosphere worse by making negative comments and starting a smear campaign against the bosses and the company. Naturally, you want to prevent that kind of thing. Nevertheless, you can't treat someone like a hardened criminal just because you've fired him. It's possible to treat people with respect in every case – also in a manner that won't scare the employees who're still there.

Here's another example from your book. The CEO of a company suddenly bursts into an employment termination meeting, just to get himself a sandwich.

Yes, that kind of thing leaves me speechless. Some people just have no manners. Often, when someone is fired, there's a high degree of indifference and sheer thoughtlessness. The main thing is that you're getting rid of a problem – only very few bosses really know what being fired can do to a person.

And what can it do?

The physiological and psychological reactions are drastic. Being fired is a shock to the system. The body immediately switches into fight-or-flight mode, like in the Stone Age when you encountered a saber-toothed tiger. It sends out a massive dose of the stress hormones adrenaline and cortisol. Your heart races, your blood

pressure shoots up and your muscles are flooded with blood. All the signals are pointing either to fight, flight, or playing dead.

That's obviously not the best moment for a fight.

Nor for flight. It's hardly possible to think clearly anymore. There are also those who are paralyzed by shock. The problem is: depending on your general state of health, in extreme cases being fired can lead to a heart attack, a stroke, or even multiple organ failure. The emotional roller coaster of being fired can also lead to panic attacks, existential fear, insomnia or depression.

Why do those affected react so violently?

For most executives who are fired, their world falls apart. At a single stroke they're no longer part of the game that meant their life to them. One of the tough things after being fired is when you notice that people only liked you because of your position, not because of who you are. You're excluded, and your contact breaks off with people who were formerly close to you. Furthermore, in executive functions and in the corresponding age group it gets a lot harder to find a new job. And that's the difference when compared to a clerk or a checkout girl. Experience shows that they generally find their way back quicker into the world of work.

It seems that suicides are becoming more frequent among executives. Is that true?

The American magazine "Newsweek" recently even wrote a cover story about a "suicide epidemic." In general, suicides have today become a very frequent cause of death in industrially advanced countries for those between the ages of 15 and 49. A not insignificant number of suicides can be traced back to being fired and to unemployment.

What are we to think of this: does it mean that being fired is such a big shock that the person involved might take his life, weeks or even months later?

Yes, but it also happens straightaway. A few years ago there was a case at a Swiss bank where a senior manager was in the middle of the employment termination meeting. He drew a gun in front of his boss and shot himself. In another case, a man got up during the meeting about his dismissal, went to the open window and jumped out. There is an urgent need for executives to engage with the topic of dismissals and to become properly aware of their great responsibility in this.

Perhaps you should offer a workshop: "How do I fire someone properly?"

I've already done that, in collaboration with a German compa-

ny that does management training. The workshop was called "Professional employee exit management." It was offered to some 6000 senior managers, but not a single person registered for it. No one! That just shows the degree to which the topic is underestimated. Most people only think about it when they're fired themselves.

That's a pretty poor showing on the part of top managers.

Sadly, in this field it's pretty normal. And yet I don't want to be just another person who joins in the mudslinging against executives. That wouldn't be fair.

But?

I have the impression that there's been a cultural shift in leadership style over the last ten or fifteen years. The manner in which people are dismissed used to be different. Before the dot-com bubble burst, and before the financial and economic crisis, people took more time for the employment termination meeting, they gave reasons and took the trouble to offer a transitional solution for a certain time. People took more care and assumed responsibility.

Why is that?

It undoubtedly also has to do with the rapid pace of life in our time, and the wholly new manner in which people communicate. Today, people don't speak with each other anymore. They mail each other, they go on chat rooms, send texts, and post things on the net. That creates neither closeness to others, nor empathy for them. It sets up distance. Ultimately it's a matter of different generations. I'm a baby boomer. My parents belonged to the war generation and brought us up in a strict atmosphere that stressed values like responsibility, discipline, integrity and strength of character. The next generations, X and Y, grew up in affluence, without any existential needs. Many think primarily about quick money, a fast career, and they are too little aware of their responsibilities to other people. That has to change. You have to remind these people that they should treat others as they would like to be treated themselves. Because it will all come back to haunt them in the end. ♦

Gabriele Euchner studied business administration at the University of Cologne, graduating with an MBA. She then enjoyed a successful international career as a manager that included serving as Country Manager Central Europe (Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands) at Mary Kay Cosmetics, where she was responsible for up to 12 000 independent consultants and 51 employees. Today she works as a self-employed management consultant and executive coach in Zurich.



Weak states, poor countries

Across the world, more than a billion people live in extreme poverty. One of the most significant reasons for this is the fact that state power is failing in many Third World countries. This is why the British economist Angus Deaton is urging the world community not simply to transfer money, but to help these countries to achieve effective governments with strong, stable structures.

In Scotland, I was brought up to think of policemen as allies and to ask one for help when I needed it. Imagine my surprise when, as a 19-year-old on my first visit to the United States, I was met by a stream of obscenities from a New York City cop who was directing traffic in Times Square after I asked him for directions to the nearest post office. In my subsequent confusion, I inserted my employer's urgent documents into a trash bin that, to me, looked a lot like a mailbox.

Europeans tend to feel more positively about their governments than do Americans, for whom the failures and unpopularity of their federal, state, and local politicians are a commonplace. Yet Americans' various governments collect taxes and, in return, provide services without which they could not easily live their lives.

Americans, like many citizens of rich countries, take for granted the legal and regulatory system, the public schools, health care and social security for the elderly, roads, defense and diplomacy, and heavy investments by the state in research, particularly in medicine. Certainly, not all of these services are as good as they might be, nor held in equal regard by everyone; but people mostly pay their taxes, and if the way that money is spent offends some, a lively public debate ensues, and regular elections allow people to change priorities.

All of this is so obvious that it hardly needs saying – at least for those who live in rich countries with effective governments. But most of the world's population does not.

The failure of state power

In much of Africa and Asia, states lack the capacity to raise taxes or deliver services. The contract between government and governed – imperfect in rich countries – is often altogether absent in poor countries. The New York cop was little more than impolite (and busy providing a service); in much of the world, police prey on the people they are supposed to protect, shaking them down for money or persecuting them on behalf of powerful patrons.

Even in a middle-income country like India, public schools and public clinics face mass (unpunished) absenteeism. Private doctors give people what (they think) they want – injections, intravenous drips, and antibiotics – but the state does not regulate them, and many practitioners are entirely unqualified.

Throughout the developing world, children die because they are born in the wrong place – not of exotic, incurable diseases, but of the commonplace childhood illnesses that we have known how to treat for almost a century. Without a state that is capable of delivering routine maternal and child health care, these children will continue to die.

Likewise, without government capacity, regulation and enforcement do not work properly, so businesses find it difficult to operate. Without properly functioning civil courts, there is no guarantee that innovative entrepreneurs can claim the rewards of their ideas.

Misdirected aid payments

The absence of state capacity – that is, of the services and protections that people in rich countries take for granted – is one of the major causes of poverty and deprivation around the world. Without effective states working with active and involved citizens, there is little chance for the growth that is needed to abolish global poverty.

Unfortunately, the world's rich countries currently are making things worse. Foreign aid – transfers from rich countries to poor countries – has much to its credit, particularly in terms of health care, with many people alive today who would otherwise be dead. But foreign aid also undermines the development of local state capacity.

This is most obvious in countries – mostly in Africa – where the government receives aid directly and aid flows are large relative to fiscal expenditure (often more than half the total). Such governments need no contract with their citizens, no parliament, and no tax-collection system. If they are accountable to anyone, it is to the donors; but even this fails in practice, because the donors, under pressure from their own citizens (who rightly want to help the poor), need to disburse money just as much as poor-country governments need to receive it, if not more so.

Effective governments for a better future

What about bypassing governments and giving aid directly to the poor? Certainly, the immediate effects are likely to be bet-

ter, especially in countries where little government-to-government aid actually reaches the poor. And it would take an astonishingly small sum of money – about 15 US cents a day from each adult in the rich world – to bring everyone up to at least the destitution line of a dollar a day.

Yet this is no solution. Poor people need government to lead better lives; taking government out of the loop might improve things in the short run, but it would leave unsolved the underlying problem. Poor countries cannot forever have their health services run from abroad. Aid undermines what poor people need most: an effective government that works with them for today and tomorrow.

One thing that we can do is to agitate for our own governments to stop doing those things that make it harder for poor countries to stop being poor. Reducing aid is one, but so is limiting the arms trade, improving rich-country trade and subsidy policies, providing technical advice that is not tied to aid, and developing better drugs for diseases that do not affect rich people. We cannot help the poor by making their already-weak governments even weaker. ♦

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“Money is everything to me”

Text: **Margrit Sprecher** | Photos: **Raphael Zubler**

Here a mechanic, there a monarch: this power discrepancy determines the life of Céphas Bansah from Ghana.

After just three minutes, Céphas Bansah takes charge of things: “First we’ll take the photos in the blue overalls.” The tone is friendly, but it’s a clear instruction. And it’s in everyone’s interest, after all. People want to see photos; no one wants to read the article. That was true in his old home country of Ghana, and it’s just as true in his new home, Germany.

He has golden buttons on his overalls that look as chic on him as would the stage costume of a pop star. He’s a real professional, popping up nimbly in his workshop in front of jacked-up





In his blue overalls, with his flat cap and screwdriver in Ludwigshafen: his kingdom here is an auto repair shop, three assistants and three apprentices.

cars, then behind them. Just when the light is right, he holds the pose. Then for another shot he sticks his head under the hood of a car, dramatically holding up a screwdriver.

When his cell phone rings, he leans against a column with all the poise of a ballet dancer. “I need the tires now,” he says. The man on the other end is talking. And talking. Céphas Bansah uses the time to check his e-mails. Finally, he loses his patience. “No, give me a good price!” And when the price is right, he orders two.

The address – Achtmorgenstrasse 17 in Ludwigshafen am Rhein, literally “Eight morning street” – sounds in German like something out of *The Thousand and One Nights*, but it actually lies in the middle of the industrial district. There are rows of auto repair shops, one after another, all of them bearing Turkish or Arabic names in a sweepingly ornate script. In the middle of them all – a foreign element in foreign surroundings – there is a

glossy black temple gate with golden, African signs on it. Above it we can read: “König Bansah” – “King Bansah.”

The here and the hereafter

The kingdom over which he rules lies some 4000 miles away in Ghana. A king can’t meddle in politics over there, for Ghana has been a democracy since 1957. Nevertheless, to his subjects he is more important than the central government in the capital, Accra. As the spiritual chief of an ethnic group he arbitrates disputes between villages, neighbors and married couples. He knows all about water rights and schools. He orders their lives in the here and now, and maintains contact with the ancestors in the hereafter. “If the King isn’t involved, nothing works,” says Céphas Bansah.

His father was omitted from the succession because he was left-handed, which is considered impure in Ghana. Nor could the tribal elders find anyone suitable among the 83 children of



In full, kingly regalia, with over 40 pounds of gold and brass around his neck: monarch of the Ewe nation in Ghana and spiritual leader of 2.3 million Ewe.

his twelve wives. Finally, someone remembered that there was a grandson of the old king who had emigrated to Germany but who regularly came back to visit his homeland. On one occasion he had brought a truckload of old water pumps, and another time he brought used bicycles and wheelchairs. The elders said: "This young man hasn't forgotten us in Europe. He'll be a good king."

Regardless of the royal honor they wanted to bestow on him, it wasn't at all easy for Céphas Bansah to convince the elders that he wasn't prepared to give up the existence he'd built up so painstakingly in Ludwigshafen. "I can do more for you all from Germany," he said. What clinched it was the first fax machine that had just been installed in the provincial capital of Hohoe. The elders saw with their own eyes just how quickly documents could now be sent from one continent to another.

Today, King Bansah still rules over his subjects by fax. But he does more than that. Every day after his evening meal he

sits at his computer and communicates with them by Skype. Local authorities have to be sent reminders, instructions given to school principals and orders given to builders. Has the money arrived? Where is it now? His Majesty goes to bed at one in the morning; but at six o'clock when he gets up he's an auto mechanic again.

It is difficult to imagine a bigger power discrepancy. In Germany he "reigns" over three assistants and three apprentices. In Ghana he rules over 300 000 members of the Ewe tribe; in neighboring Togo, another two million Ewe listen to what he says.

In Ludwigshafen he installs carburetors, while in his African kingdom he constructs bridges and workshops for apprentices. In Europe, his fans slap him on the back on the street. In Africa, his subjects have to kneel before him and pass on their questions and requests through an intermediary.

“We Africans can switch back and forth easily”

Céphas Bansah manages this balancing act with ease. “We Africans can switch back and forth easily.” That was a trick they learned in colonial times. They move seamlessly between their own language and that of their former colonial masters. They go to church, get themselves baptized as Protestants – like Céphas Bansah – but afterwards still make sacrifices to their old gods, spirits and demons. “It’s like reading a book,” he says. “You close one and open another.”

The extensive living room above King Bansah’s workshop is also divided into two worlds. “That’s Africa, and this is Europe,” he says with an elegant gesture, pointing across the room. Almost all of Europe is occupied by a gigantic leatherette sofa set. Africa looks like a souvenir shop with black wooden carvings, pictures and cushions everywhere. On the floor lie animal skins, both striped and dappled. At the foot of his throne lie stuffed big cats, frozen in a threatening, open-mouthed snarl.

Two voodoo figures guard the border between Africa and Europe. Their menacing white faces ensure that you couldn’t mistake them for harmless decorations. Voodoo in Ludwigs-hafen? King Bansah shakes his head. The figures need music, drums and rituals before they can unleash their power. And probably a different sky from the gray, cloudy dome looming over the town’s industrial landscape.

When he is photographed, King Bansah makes sure that the German flag is always visible. He owes everything to Germany. His grandfather was a fan of Germany, too. Their German colonial masters were less barbaric than the French or the English when it came to hewing down the trees that were holy to the Ewe. And they placed an emphasis on good, solid craftsmanship. In 1970 the King decided to send his grandson to Germany on a school exchange program.

From Pope to pop stars

Céphas Bansah’s German diplomas as a master mechanic for motor vehicles and farm machinery hang on the wall – each of them graded “very good.” They are surrounded by innumerable other certificates, all behind glass. On photos we see King Bansah with his son and daughter and with VIPs such as Helmut Kohl and Pope John Paul II. On others King Bansah is a star guest at wine festivals, on the German TV channels ARD and ZDF or alongside the folk-pop duo the “Wildecker Herzbuben.”

The walls are completely covered in these photos and documents. But they have nothing to do with vanity. They are seals

of quality, proofs, almost incantations. “In Germany I have learned how important papers are. If you’re not someone here, then you’re worth nothing,” says King Bansah.

In order to remain tangible as King, not just at one remove by fax or Skype, King Bansah flies to Ghana eight to ten times a year. Always with a big entourage – with friends, interested businessmen and his wife Gabriele. Lufthansa grants them special tariffs.

Gabriele comes from the Palatinate region and is a trained IT specialist. She got to know her husband when she was a customer in his workshop. She already knew who he was beforehand: “He was on all the TV channels. I saw him every week on TV.” Today, she does the King’s administrative work. “My tasks are not as extensive.” In Ghana, people call her the “Queen Mother.”

“Time to get up, darling!”

King Bansah’s court is situated in the town of Hohoe, in a large house built in the western style. Already from four o’clock in the morning, says his wife Gabi, they can hear from their bedroom the murmuring of thirty to forty people waiting to see their King. In Ghana, people are already out and about before the sun rises in the sky. “Time to get up, darling,” she tells her husband.

Some of his subjects just want to greet him, while others want advice, are looking for a job or would like money for a medical consultation or for school. In fact, King Bansah’s court is not very different from a public welfare department or an employment office in Europe.

Most problems can be solved with money, says King Bansah. “First you need money. Then secondly, thirdly, fourthly and fifthly you need money. In Ghana, I can save a girl’s life with fifteen euros. Money is everything to me.”

In order to get money for his “King Bansah Ghana Support Association,” King Bansah does a lot of things. At Christmas he sings the German carol “O Christmas tree” in his mother tongue on TV. On Mother’s Day he sings a declaration of love to his wife Gabi: “A heart of gold.” And at the FIFA Soccer World Cup he’s careful not to take sides, singing his own composition “King Football” for the Germans and the Ghanaian football hymn for the Ghanaians.

Even his marriage to Gabi in Tritthenheim in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate was used as PR for his association: thousands of guests were invited. It was also to promote his

association that he let himself be crowned “Wine King” of the Palatinate region after no suitable “Wine Queen” could be found. He also earns a fee when he does official openings as His Majesty.

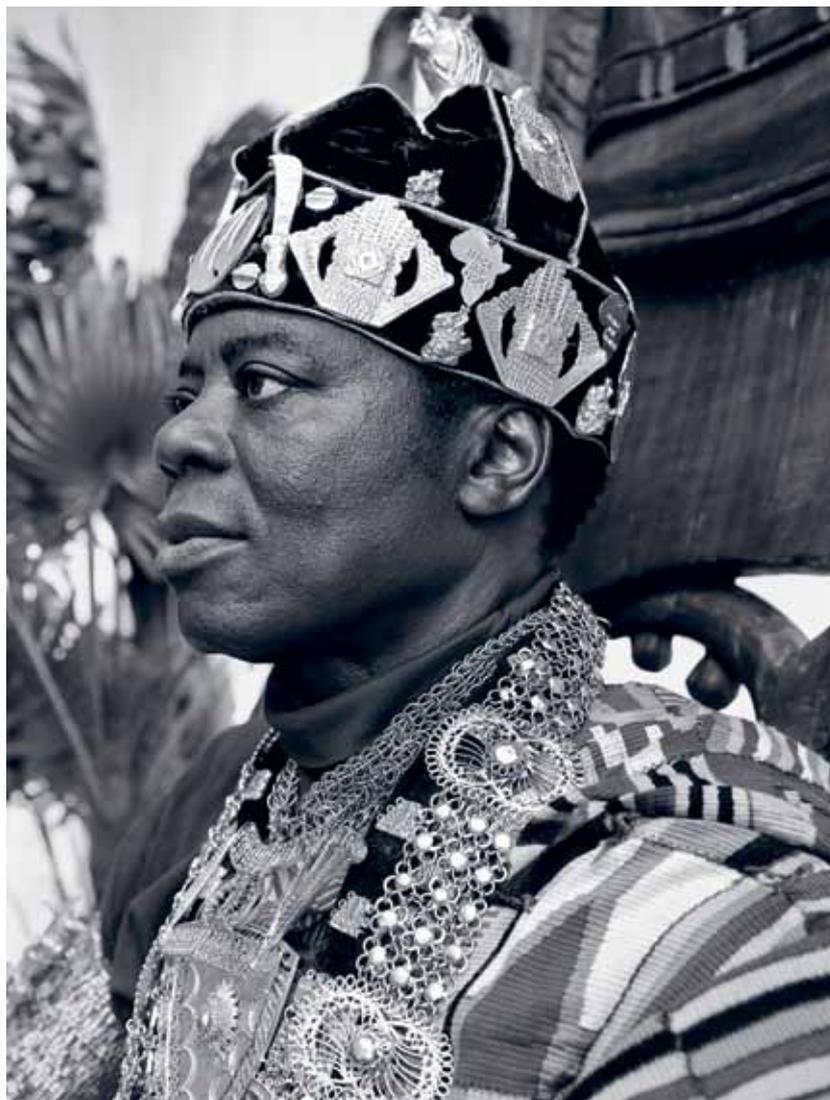
He also sells his own CDs. His bestseller is the pop song “African party.” He sells coasters, pens and T-shirts with his own logo. And he brews “King Bansah Beer.” All after the manner of the European high aristocracy, who also use their names to sell mineral water, handbags or cars. Céphas Bansah might be an excellent mechanic and an extraordinarily prudent king. But his biggest talent is undoubtedly as his own PR manager. His newest idea is collecting used eyeglasses, according to the motto: “Bring your old ones back!”

Nonslip crown

For the next pictures at the photo shoot, King Bansah wants to

change clothes: “I’ll be back in a moment,” he says, and disappears. We hear something jingling, then silence. A door slams somewhere. Then we hear the voice of Mrs. Bansah. Finally, the bead curtain parts and the King enters.

He couldn’t appear more regal. Opulent robes hang nonchalantly over one shoulder, glowing in all the colors of Africa. Over 40 pounds of gold and brass hang around his neck and on his chest. The crown sits fast above his eyes – it’s the nonslip crown that he also wears on processions around the city. His feet are in pointed golden shoes, a heavy ring is on every finger and in his hand he carries the tassel with the bushel of hairs from the buffalo that was slaughtered when he was crowned in 1992. The ceremony meant having to wade through warm sheep’s blood, and then voodoo priests cut his arms and chest to rub a herb powder into the wounds. He has never known greater pain, neither before nor since.





If the King is seated on his throne in Africa, his subjects must approach him kneeling and convey their requests through an intermediary.



King Bansah's face exudes a great calm; his happy-go-lucky attitude has evaporated. His wife Gabi brings him a brocade sheath from which he carefully draws a long wooden stick. "It used to belong to my grandpa." The carvings on it show the king, lifting up another man so that he might reach the fruit of a tree. It's King Bansah's government program, carved into wood: helping his people. "That is what power means to me. The chance to give a chance to others. If I can help other people, that makes me strong."

It's got to be voodoo

Sometimes, when he is in his king's robes in the street on his way to a function, the uninitiated make fun of him, albeit good-humoredly: "Hey, carnival time's over!" they cry. Then King Bansah patiently explains everything to them, and they go away happy to have actually met a real king. Her husband has never been harassed by racists, says Gabi Bansah. "Not even in the east of the country." There is a word for so much personal magnetism and carefree self-confidence: charisma.

Céphas Bansah can well use this charisma in his hard everyday life as a mechanic. "Come in, my dear," he calls to a woman standing in the doorway to the workshop. She doesn't look much like a "dear," more like a great angel of vengeance. She rages that her car was promised by five o'clock, but it's already six p.m. King Bansah smiles, busies himself with her car, smiles again, and now and then offers a few charming words in her direction.

And then, finally, it happens – the customer simply can't help smiling. Then her smile turns into a grin, and suddenly she seems to have all the time in the world. She looks around the workshop, chatting to him as she does so. A deep sense of calm spreads out through the room – the hustle and bustle of the world is far away. No, such a miracle can't just be charisma – it's got to be voodoo. ♦



You can find a picture gallery for this article at www.lgt.com/credo

Margrit Sprecher was on the editorial staff and a head of department at the Zurich magazine "Weltwoche" from 1983 to 2003. Since then she has worked as a freelance journalist, writing for the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung," "Das Magazin," "Die Zeit" and "Geo," and has also written books. The journalistic quality of her reports won her the first Klagenfurt Journalism Prize and the Egon Erwin Kisch Prize; she has also been awarded the Zurich Journalism Prize for her life's work.

The last of his line

We see before us a man in his best years. The very room in which he is standing boasts of his power and wealth. The scene behind him is resplendent with sword, mace, Spanish helmet, chainmail armor, round shield and juniper branches, all of which testify to his status as a warrior and man of glory. Through a window we have a clear view of his castle. A triangular medalion hangs from the cornice of a red cupboard in the right half of the picture, bearing a cross and the year 1525. It is a memento of the sitter's early years as a soldier, when he took part in the Battle of Pavia. The mirror and the "vanitas" still life with the skull and the near-empty hourglass on the cupboard serve to remind us, however, that such fame is transient, as are all the things of man. They are there to let us know that the man portrayed is approaching the close of his life.

This is the setting for our portrait of the imposing Ladislaus von Fraunberg, Count of Haag (1505?–1566). The hand on the dagger is a classical metaphor of his power and dominion. The fine leather gloves in the Count's right hand, the golden decoration on his beret with the ostrich feather, the lavish golden ornamentation on his clothing and the heavy gold chains – all these are signs of his wealth.

But the Count's most remarkable attribute is the leopard to his left with the initials LS on its collar. It is the "tiger animal [that was] always with him, like a dog," of which Prince Gundakar of Liechtenstein later reported in a letter of 1640, and which the Count had been given as a gift by his Italian relatives.

It is impossible to guess here that Ladislaus von Fraunberg had in fact already suffered an irretrievable loss of power when the Munich master Hans Mielich (1516–1573) painted his life-sized portrait in 1557, though he is depicted as a man whose pride has remained unbroken. For the Count of Haag had led a checkered life, marked by vain efforts to produce an heir. But he was the last of his line, and proved unable to find a means to ensure the future of the family name.

Ladislaus had been just twenty years old when he fought with the Imperial troops in the Battle of Pavia in February 1525.

Success in the battle allowed the Hapsburgs to turn the balance of power in their favor, against the French king. But Ladislaus afterwards swapped sides, entering the service of Francis I, King of France. As punishment, the Emperor stripped him of half his earldom, and he had to buy it back at a high price after his return in 1529. From 1536 to 1538 Ladislaus was in Imperial service again, in Italy, and in 1541 he married Maria Salome, the daughter of Margrave Ernst of Baden. But all their children died while still young, and he lost his wife, too, in 1549.

In 1555 he married for a second time: the niece of the Duke of Ferrara, Emilia Rovella di Pio from the d'Este family. But this match proved turbulent. The bride's mother hid her daughter from the Count, sending her to a convent, and he had to pay a large sum to buy himself out of the marriage contract. The bride's mother kept the dowry and even commissioned assassins to try and murder him. Ultimately, the leopard remained his only Italian conquest.

Ladislaus returned from Italy, humiliated. In the summer of 1557, the year in which his portrait was painted, he wooed Margarethe von Trenbach. But he could not marry her, either, because the Pope refused to annul his marriage with Emilia – the d'Este family presumably had the better connections to the Papacy. In 1556, Ladislaus converted to the Protestant faith. The Bavarian Duke Albrecht V had long wanted to merge Ladislaus's small earldom with his own lands, and in September 1557 he took Ladislaus captive in Altötting and had him brought to Munich. Ladislaus was able to buy himself free for a large ransom on November 2. The Count afterwards tried to set up a marriage with a Protestant princess from Saxony, but he died in 1566 before it was settled, and was still without the heir he had so yearned for. His earldom thereupon reverted to Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria. ♦

Dr. Johann Kräftner is the director of the Princely Collections of the House of Liechtenstein and from 2002 to 2011 was director of the LIECHTENSTEIN MUSEUM, Vienna. He is the author of numerous monographs on the history and theory of architecture.





Master of the Universe

In “The Bonfire of the Vanities,” Tom Wolfe brought the insatiable 1980s and the “rousing sound of the greed storm” on Wall Street to a literary climax. Since its publication, this novel has been consulted after every subsequent stock market crash, and praised for its shrewd characterization of brokers and speculators. But “The Bonfire of the Vanities” is only superficially a novel about Wall Street. It is really about the fateful interplay of power and powerlessness, truth and untruth.

Sherman McCoy, a domineering New York bond trader and self-appointed “Master of the Universe,” takes a wrong turn into the Bronx with Maria, his mistress. They lose their way in the “eerie grid of the city.” “He leaned forward over the steering wheel. The headlights shot across the concrete columns in a

delirium. He shifted into second gear. He turned left around an abutment and gunned it up the ramp ... A blur in his headlights ... It was lying in the road, blocking the way ... Sherman jammed down on the brake ...”

When he gets out of the car to clear the obstacle from the street, two young blacks come toward him. McCoy panics, as does Maria, who grabs the steering wheel and runs over one of the two youths as she and McCoy drive off in the car. Because going to the police would mean revealing their affair, Maria manages to convince McCoy to ignore his urge to do the decent, honest thing. The tragedy of the tale lies not just in the fact that their hit-and-run accident comes to light all the same, but in the prejudices that envelop Sherman McCoy because his case is just



Tom Wolfe

Tom Wolfe was born on March 2, 1931, in Richmond, Virginia, and studied English at Yale University. He first made a name for himself as a journalist who increasingly took the upper classes to task in the early 1960s with his daring, witty reports for the "New York Herald Tribune." His writing made him one of the founders of the "New Journalism." In 1965 he published a collection of his articles in a book entitled "The Kandy-Kolored Tangerine-Flake Streamline Baby." When he brought out his first novel in 1987, "The Bonfire of the Vanities," Wolfe was already in his mid-50s. To this day, "Bonfire" is regarded as his main work, despite successful later novels such as "A Man in Full" (1998), "I am Charlotte Simmons" (2004) and "Back to Blood" (2012). Tom Wolfe likes to see himself as a "secretary of society," a moral historian in the tradition of Honoré de Balzac. He lives on Long Island.

what's needed by a frustrated district attorney, by unscrupulous tabloid reporters, by an influential reverend from Harlem and – not least – by several gloating broker colleagues.

One after another, all the things that have seemed to give the characters security turn out to be illusions, whether this happens to be a marriage, a family, a handsome million dollar a year salary or a miserably paid job for the government. It's men who are the protagonists here, but the women play their part in their men's recklessness and their dramatic, fateful decisions – they lead them on as they blindly cross the boundary between risk and madness. If we follow Tom Wolfe's satire to its murky depths, then we see that these women are neither worthy of their men's heroic acts, nor do they appreciate them.

The notion that if everyone takes care of themselves then everybody is taken care of here becomes its own justification, and Wolfe savors the consequences of this egocentric self-indulgence down to the very last, bitter detail. McCoy has borrowed the title of "Master of the Universe" from a toy belonging to his little daughter. And his childish hunger for power proves just as disastrous as that of the populist black reverend Bacon, who also tries to capitalize on the case, and that of Assistant District Attorney Larry Kramer, who finally sees a chance to satisfy his class envy by humiliating McCoy.

Above all, Wolfe shows what happens when everyone only looks out for themselves: "And he now understood what it was that gave him a momentary lift each morning ... It was the power of the government over the freedom of its subjects. To think of it in the abstract made it seem so theoretical and academic,

but to *feel* it – to see *the looks on their faces* – as they stare back at you ..." With this late debut novel, Wolfe has squarely placed himself in the tradition of Honoré de Balzac, Émile Zola and the European social novel of the 19th century.

Wolfe had already developed a sketch for the plot in 1984 and 1985 and wrote the novel as a serial for "Rolling Stone" magazine, under the pressure of its regular editorial deadlines. The book was then published as a whole in 1987, after having been heavily revised. The first thing that strikes one when reading it again today is the way Wolfe grabs hold of the reader with his terrific verbal speed, as if slamming him into the passenger seat before thundering through the urban canyons of New York as the engine roars. During this wild sightseeing tour, you're completely at Wolfe's mercy.

The energy pulsating through Wolfe's narrative does not come from his characters, but from the metropolis of New York with its unpredictable politics, its unreliable police force, its unrelenting press, its race conflicts and its class wars. Here, everyone is both victim and villain. Ultimately, Sherman McCoy recognizes that the prejudices of the media make it impossible for him to evade the judgment of the courts. The only thing over which he still has any control is his own inner attitude. ♦

Felicitas von Lovenberg, born in 1974, is head of the literature section at the "Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung" and hosts the TV program "Literatur im Foyer" for SWR in Germany (Southwest Broadcasting Company).

Man of action



Recorded by: **Susan Rupp**

Giovanni Netzer is the director and initiator of the Origen Festival of Culture in the canton of the Grisons, whose main venue is Riom Castle. But Netzer also takes dance, song and the spoken word to meadows, reservoir dams, mountain passes and even barns around the canton and outside it. He's bold, imaginative and profound.

I'd describe myself as a person who takes a pristine joy in everything that exceeds reality: in that state of transcendence that opens new, different worlds in the theater, in literature and in music. I love to offer new interpretations of the stories and memories of humankind, placing them in a contemporary context. I feel quite at home in the books of the Old Testament, for example. There the focus is all on issues of humanity; the people in them engage with fundamental things and there is a huge amount there that's highly topical today. That's also similar to the concept behind the Origen Festival of Culture.

There are different opinions about how you should direct a play or an opera. Personally, I take an interest in the actors, I want to find out who they are, who they'd like to be, and where they want to try out something new – and then we develop the piece together. As a director I do have my own ideas, but then I go to the rehearsals where I have to be flexible and let myself be

surprised. It's tiring to work this way as a director, having to live with so much uncertainty. But taking a big risk also gives you a lot of freedom.

Whether or not a director has to be authoritarian depends wholly on the actors. With some it's important that you say very clearly what you would like, because they need this kind of safeguard to be able to act. Other artists will search of their own accord and experiment. That's exciting and especially believable. And believability is always an issue when you're playing out in nature. Nature has an incredible power. It's unavoidable, and really restricts how you perform. It challenges us to think about what we really would like to say. Nature casts us back into the existential circle of becoming, being and decaying. It has the power to compel us to use a simpler language, simpler movements, less spectacle. But perhaps it also makes us go back more to the essence of things.

I grew up with three languages: Romansh, Italian and German. On stage I link these languages with each other; new ones also join them, and sometimes there's no language at all. For the atmosphere and the understanding of the plot, the individual sound of a language is important. I myself think, dream and count in Romansh. And so it was always clear to me that I belong here. In the Grisons I feel the power of nature, the power of freedom.



At the Origen Festival of Culture in the Grisons, productions take place in the open air and in the colossal auditorium in the local 13th-century castle of Riom. The castle stands in the Surses Valley.

Money is always an issue. The central Grisons are a region with a weak infrastructure and there are no wealthy communities. We – I mean the Origen Foundation – had to rely on private backers very early on. We are also supported a lot by different organizations that have an interest in the development of the mountain region. We also get monies from the cultural authorities and from patrons. Origen is a regional development project and we are actively seeking our future. We bring life into the village and help to maintain local structures. We work in harmony with village traditions. Cultural assets don't always coincide with economic wealth.

I would say that there is hardly any other theatrical institution in Europe that is as free as we are. We don't have any mission and have no guidelines – unlike a city opera house, for example. We can do what we want. I would never exchange the freedom that I have here for the administrative responsibility of an opera house. We are privileged here. We are allowed to experiment.

In the last ten years, the audience numbers at the Origen Festival of Culture have risen from 2000 to 20 000, even though we haven't been guided by any marketing plan – we've just done what we want. What matters is not for whom we work, but with whom.

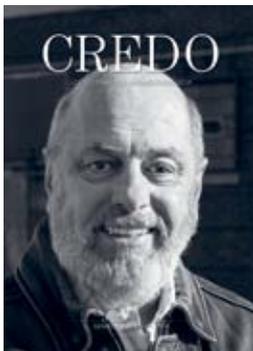
I usually stay up very late. If I don't have an evening performance, I'll go to other events, cultivate my network or rehearse with the actors. I'm 47 now, so I have 18 years until I retire, theoretically, and I have far too many ideas. I'll be up late today as well. But I don't need much sleep. ♦

Giovanni Netzer – theologian, art historian and doctor of theater studies – grew up in Savognin in the canton of the Grisons. He wrote his first play at the age of nine, which comprised five acts on two pages. Later he studied in Chur and Munich. After concluding his doctorate on Rhaeto-Romanic dramas of the 18th century, he returned to Riom in the Surses Valley. He brought with him the idea of setting up a theater festival. Today, ten years later, Origen has grown into an important cultural institution, and Netzer is its soul and its stimulus. He has been awarded various cultural prizes, including the Hans Reinhart Ring in 2007, the Main Prize of the Eliette von Karajan Cultural Foundation in 2008 and the Cultural Prize of the Grisons. Above all, however, he is a man of action, a motivator and a visionary. He not only has nine world premières in his calendar for 2014, but he has also just published two photographic books about the theatrical productions of the Origen Festival of Culture.

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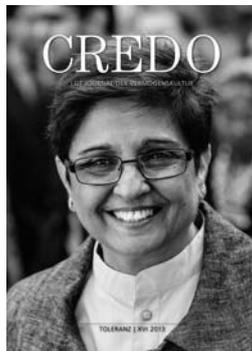
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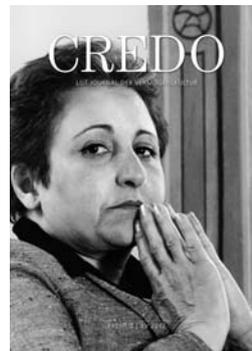
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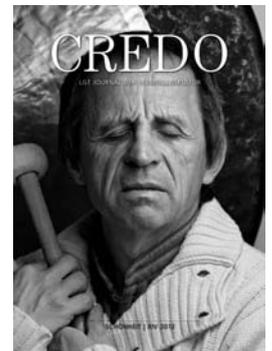
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