

*Georg Winter*

## **Basic text**

# **“RIGHTS OF NATURE / BIOCRACY”\***

### **1. On the current situation and its demand**

Through the exploitation of natural resources and the strain put on the environment by pollutants, our technological civilization is becoming disconnected from our ecosystem on such a high level that, in the long run, the self-destruction of humanity seems not only possible, but exceedingly likely. Hence our most important future objective is the reunification of our technological civilization with our natural environment.

The wall between nature and our technological civilization must fall!

*It is about a quest for the reunification of nature and technological civilization!*

\* This contribution is repeated at the end of every volume of the series “Economic texts concerning the rights of nature / biocracy” and forms a bridge to the next volume.

The basic demand of this reunification is the fundamental decision of human society for a sustainable path of development. The core condition for this in turn is the general recognition of the “rights of nature”.

## **2. Phases of development in the relationship between nature and civilization so far**

So far, four phases of development in the relationship between nature and civilization are to be noted:

### *1 Primary equilibrium phase – Homo integratus*

In the early history of humanity, there was a primary state of equilibrium in which the activities of humans hardly impacted the ecosystem. We can describe this phase as Homo integratus, humans integrated into nature.

### *2 Relative equilibrium phase - Homo occupans*

What followed was a state of relative equilibrium in which a structured exploitation of resources began, but did not overwhelm the ecosystem. Humans increasingly occupied habitats until they achieved a dominant position in the following phase.

### *3 Disequilibrium phase - Homo dominans*

Massive escalation of the technological activities of humans qualitatively developed into an endangerment of the long term existence of human life on earth.

#### 4 *Critical phase - Homo isolatus*

We currently find ourselves in the fourth, critical phase in which humans in many countries on earth have physically and mentally isolated themselves from nature and denatured into Homo isolatus. People working in industry are often viewed merely as means of production, consumers as sources of profit, plants and animals as commodities.

We can predict two alternative development axes, each with three phases of development:

### 3. **“Business-as-usual scenario” starting from the critical phase**

#### 1 *Confrontational phase - Homo egocentricus*

In the business-as-usual scenario, humans enter a confrontational phase in which they live only for their immediate benefit as Homo egocentricus. By doing so, they risk, in the medium and long term, extreme destruction and damage – an acceleration of climate change, catastrophic famine in other countries, military conflicts over scarce resources and regions that are still ecologically functional.

#### 2 *Destructive phase - Homo anarchicus*

The transition into the next phase, the destructive phase, is fluent. It is marked by overpopulation, mass mortality, wars over migration and resources, self-defensive terrorism, and a breakdown of social, cultural and

economic order. It is the hour of Homo anarchicus with its survival-of-the-fittest aggression.

### 3 *Secondary equilibrium phase under exclusion of humanity - Homo extinctus*

The final phase of this scenario is the secondary equilibrium phase, which arises when the overstraining of the ecosystem through emissions, the total exploitation of resources and the existential wars between the remaining population groups have led to the extensive extinction of humanity and subsequently to the protection of nature from further intrusion by humans. At the end of the business-as-usual scenario, we find an extinct human race, Homo extinctus, which once believed itself to be Homo sapiens.

## **4. Change-of-course scenario starting from the critical phase**

Our hope and motivation is that starting at the critical phase, a change-of-course scenario is also possible.

### 1 *Reorientation phase - Homo solidarius*

A reorientation phase will lead to the formation of Homo solidarius, which develops responsibility for disadvantaged sections of the population, for developing countries in need of aid, for future generations, and for the protection of nature and biological diversity. The realization of the self-endangerment of humanity will lead to national laws and international contracts that will prevent ecological depletion.

## 2 *Adaptation phase - Homo fraternus*

What follows is an environmentally conscious adaptation phase in which a sense of responsibility and actions based on solidarity develop into a culture of fraternity. The fraternal human, *Homo fraternus*, acts as a member of a family which encompasses all living beings, all current and future generations of humans, plants and animals on the entire planet. The economic system is integrated into the ecosystem, which then gradually heals.

## 3 *Secondary equilibrium phase with inclusion of humanity - Homo reintegratus*

While at the end of the first scenario (business-as-usual) nature enters a secondary equilibrium phase without the participation of humanity, the change-of-course scenario leads to nature entering a secondary equilibrium phase which includes human participation. Increased environmental consciousness, bitter experience, and scientific discovery come into effect. Humans reintegrate themselves into the ecosystem, thus becoming *Homo reintegratus*. The technological civilization of humanity has reached a state of permanent harmony with nature.

## **5. Position and awareness on the crossroads of the two development alternatives**

Almost tragically, numerous truly environmentally conscious entrepreneurs struggling for the ecological optimum are aware that their enterprise is – directly or indirectly, more or less – participating in the depletion of earth's finite resources and by polluting the atmosphere,

even within legal boundaries, contributing to the continuing destruction of the environment.

Thousands of entrepreneurs are under way to loosen this entanglement in the global work of destruction. Many introduce a management system that gives direction to all areas of the enterprise, from employee training to logistics, from product development and production down to the architecture of the production facilities, providing orientation not only toward economic success but also toward environmental protection (“environmentally conscious business management”). Some even include additional social factors (“Corporate Social Responsibility”, CSR). These entrepreneurs experience that in many cases, it is possible to minimize resource usage and atmospheric pollution and, by doing so, improve their enterprise’s economic success and ability to compete on the market.

However, far-sighted entrepreneurs are aware that by such methods they can reduce, but not entirely eliminate their enterprise’s contribution to the global work of destruction. The current general economic framework makes it impossible for entrepreneurs to truly act sustainably. Their production would become so expensive that competitors who do not take sustainability into account and thus have lower costs would elbow them off the market.

Courageous entrepreneurs face this dilemma by going beyond entrepreneurial optimization and also becoming active on a macroeconomic level, i.e. in areas such as civil voting, associations and economic politics.

There is a necessity to work for the creation of sustainability-oriented frameworks of economic activity. What we need is a pertinent *ecological framework*

*arrangement*. The core point here is – as mentioned repeatedly – the recognition of “*rights of nature*”.

## **6. “Human Rights” and “Rights of Nature”**

Generally, nature is not dependent on humans granting it rights. In fact, humans are dependent on nature offering conditions for life that make their survival possible. Nature doesn't care if climatic changes, volcanic eruptions or diseases encroach upon the constitutional right of humans to physical well-being.

Nature is above every species it has produced, including the human species and its legal system.

By “granting” nature its own rights and thus placing it on the same level as humans within our legal system, humanity is also serving itself. The best way for humans to protect themselves is by protecting nature from themselves. If humans recognize and enforce a basic right of all living beings to exist, this represents a survival strategy for humans as well. In the long run, it will not be possible to enforce human rights without recognizing the rights of nature.

“Human rights” require “rights of nature”. Many of the rights granted to humans in the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” lose their meaning in the case of continued destruction of the environment. Someone who has no access to drinkable water due to environmental destruction will have little use for the human right to freedom of speech. The human right to property becomes a farce when a tsunami caused by climate change rolls over the towns of an island.

But human rights need rights of nature not only in order to assert themselves and retain real meaning, but also to gain a watertight justification

Human rights were conceived mainly as liberties. But liberty does not mean being allowed to do anything one wants. Liberty is not capricious freedom; it is the freedom to do what does not harm others. In this way, liberty is defined by the limits and rights of others, thus being defined and limited. By addressing nature as a carrier of its own rights and thus as a legal subject (instead of simply a legal object) one does no more and no less than placing it on one level with the “others”.

In that case, rights of nature occupy the same rank as human rights, and that is the key facet of their recognition that makes them enforceable. The legal systems of many states already demand that the concerns of nature be taken into account in some well defined way. Recognizing nature’s own rights, however, clearly goes a step further!

“Rights of nature” are not to be confused with the natural rights of humans in the sense of natural law. According to the teachings of natural law, humans gain certain basic rights not because these rights are given to them by the state, but simply through being a human and thus a natural, rational being. The “rights of nature” on the other hand describe rights given to other living things by state jurisdiction.

There is a big difference between charging humans with certain duties toward nature – as in current jurisprudence – and giving nature its own basic rights. This difference will manifest itself in public consciousness, future judicial developments, and political agendas

Even in times of slavery and serfdom, there were more or less binding codes of conduct for the treatment of slaves and serfs. But the abolition of slavery and serfdom

did not come until the people were given their own rights by the legal systems – regardless of their social standing.

The same applies and will apply to the “rights of nature”! Putting them on an equal footing is the lever for actual implementation and enforcement.

## **7. “Rights of nature” and “Biocracy”**

Humanity must realize that all states of the world are superseded by a state of higher order. This state is nature. The state territory is the biosphere, the state populace is the totality of all life forms, and authority of the state is the evolution of all life. The state form is biocracy, a government of life.

If humans wish to survive, they must reproduce the biocratic order they live under along with all other life forms in the order of their respective nation-states. This does not exclude the simultaneous fulfillment of ethical and cultural demands of humans; on the contrary, it constructively includes them.

Throughout the course of history, the circle of those who contribute to the formation of state consensus has – apart from certain regressions – continually increased:

- From solitary rule (monarchy, tyrannis) to the rule of the few (aristocracy, oligarchy) onward to the rule of the majority (polity, democracy).
- This development continues within democracy: from the class-based vote to the general vote; add to this the expansion of the circle of those eligible to vote

(introduction of women's suffrage, the right of foreigners to vote, the reduction of the voting age).<sup>1</sup>

The next consistent step is the expansion of participation to humanity's fellow creatures. It leads us from democracy to biocracy. By taking this step, the human state makes sure that the survival interest of all living beings is secured in state ordinance, represented in parliament, and implemented in practical politics in such a way, as if the living species had a seat and a say in parliament. A number of basic expedient legal instruments have already been developed by the legal sciences. What seems like a utopia actually represents a survival strategy for humans as well.

Evolution granted humans rationality and thus a quantum leap in terms of power. Nature will drive humans to extinction unless they balance this quantum leap in power with a quantum leap in ethical consciousness. Such ethics demand that we preserve life, foster life, and allow life to flourish.

Let us briefly sum up:

The state form biocracy is an expanded democracy in which not only humans but all living things are recognized as populace, equipped with basic rights and – by means of appropriate forms of representation – represented in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Eberhard Seidel/Eberhard K. Seifert (2011): „Biokratie“ – Weiterentwicklung politischer Willensbildung (“‘Biocracy’ – further development of political consensus formation”) in: Seidel, E. (publisher), Georg Winter – Pionier der umweltbewussten Unternehmensführung (“Georg Winter – pioneer of environmentally conscious business administration”). Festschrift for Georg Winter in light of his 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday, Marburg, p. 495.

parliament. The state form biocracy means: to respect human dignity, to preserve and foster life, to resolve value conflicts with conscientious consideration, and to resolutely defend endangered life.

*The conceptual connection between “rights of nature” and “biocracy” can be described as follows – by all means in the sense of a formal definition:*

- *The sufficiently comprehensive codification of the rights of nature represents the normative conception of biocracy.*
- *The sufficiently comprehensive implementation and conservation of the rights of nature represents the descriptive realization of biocracy.*

*The total recognition of and adherence to the “rights of nature” represents the **implementation of biocracy.***

## **8. Augmentation of the Declaration of Human Rights through a Declaration of the Rights of Nature**

On December 10<sup>th</sup> 1948, the general assembly of the United Nations passed the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights”.

Precisely 60 years later, on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, a group of renowned experts followed my invitation to the HAUS DER ZUKUNFT in Hamburg to discuss if and how the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” should be expanded to include a “Universal Declaration of the Rights of Nature”.

The basis of the discussion was the outline of the Declaration of the Rights of Nature which included the following regulations:

„Every living thing possesses natural dignity and the right – within the boundaries of natural cycles and food chains – to live according to its nature.

Humans have the duty to preserve and protect each other and their fellow creatures. They are to protect the individual creature, the population and the species, as well as the natural cohabitation (biotope) and the landscape as a habitat.

Humans may only interfere with the living rights of their fellow creatures in such cases in which they are pursuing goals which, after rational consideration, appear to have priority.

Humans may not interfere with the living rights of their fellow creatures if the same goal can be achieved through different or milder means.

The signatory states are to ensure that the rights of nature and the observation of the duties of humans are enforced by means of civil law, penal law, administrative law and all other areas of jurisdiction.“<sup>2</sup>

The only country thus far to incorporate the rights of nature into its constitution is Ecuador. The man responsible for this achievement is Alberto Acosta who, on October 20<sup>th</sup> 2009, following an invitation by the Federal President of Germany in the course of the event „Diversity of Modernity – Perspectives of Modernity“ talked extensively about the rights of nature in a keynote presentation. Our initiative, in collaboration with Alberto

<sup>2</sup> Outline for a Declaration of the Rights of Nature on initiative of Dr. Georg Winter, expert discussion in the HAUS DER ZUKUNFT 10.12.2008 in Hamburg.

Acosta, is currently developing a strategy for further steps.<sup>3</sup>

## **9. Biocracy Prize for juristic works on participatory rights of nature**

In 2008, on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the research center for environmental law at the University of Hamburg, I founded the Biocracy Prize for juristic discussions about participatory rights of nature, which was awarded for the first time in 2010, and the second time in 2013.

The research center for environmental law at the faculty for legal sciences, University of Hamburg, which is directed by Hans-Joachim Koch, the former long-standing chairman of the expert council for environmental questions of the German federal government (2002-2008), describes the assignment for the prize as follows:

“Art. 20a of the [German] constitution obligates the state to protect the natural necessities of life and the animals in responsibility to future generations. In the democratic process of consensus formation, however, nature and future generations do not have a voice. Rather, they must rely on the parliaments to appropriately and voluntarily commit to the protection of nature and the future, and on the administrations to consistently take legislative action in this regard.

<sup>3</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> Discussion round „Vielfalt der Moderne“ (“Diversity of Modern Times”) following the Initiative of the Federal President on 20.10.2009 in Berlin, with a keynote presentation by economist Alberto Acosta about the Ecuadorian constitution, which postulates the indigenous concept of „sumak kawsay“, or „good life“.

In order to implement effective protection of nature and the environment, legal instruments are being developed to allow for effective representation of intergenerational environmental protection in political and executive decision making processes on a national level, but also in the European Union and in the framework of the international community.

This includes, among other things, further development of public participation, class action, and organizational structures of the state which can secure the observation of environmental concerns in a joint effort.”<sup>4</sup>

Putting the aforementioned areas of concern into more concrete terms, the research center for environmental law at the University of Hamburg has named research fields in which scientific works for the “Research prize for jurisprudential works for the protection of the natural necessities of life and the animals” which I founded.<sup>5</sup>

- Participation of the public in environmental matters – stocktaking and perspectives in international and European law as well as in German environmental law.
- State-level, European and international institutions as “attorneys of nature” – institutional and problems of transferring control competencies to independent specialized bodies.

<sup>4</sup> Cf online: <http://www.haus-der-zukunft-hamburg.de/download/umweltrecht/biokratiepreis-auslobungstext.pdf>, from 10-03-2011.

<sup>5</sup> Cf online: <http://www.haus-der-zukunft-hamburg.de/download/umweltrecht/biokratiepreis-auslobungstext.pdf>, from 10.03.2011.

- The idea of an international environmental court – institutional, procedural and competency-related aspects.
- Conservation of vital natural resources as a joint effort in political and administrative decision making bodies.

So far, the Biocracy Prize has been awarded twice, to four individuals in total.

## **10. From United Nations to United Nature – initiative for a Flag of United Nature**

On December 10<sup>th</sup> 2008, marking the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, at 5 minutes to 12, four northern German environmental institutions raised the Flag of United Nature which I designed – as a symbol for the urgency of the amendment of human rights to include the rights of nature.

The participants were the HAUS DER ZUKUNFT in Hamburg, which had existed for ten years that day, the Eekholt Wildlife Park in Schleswig-Holstein, as well as the “Zukunftszentrum Mensch-Natur-Technik-Wissenschaft” (ZMTW; “Future Center Humanity-Nature-Technology-Science”) in Niecklitz, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and the Embassy of Wildlife of the German Wildlife Foundation – all institutions that have played a pioneer role in the spreading of environmentally oriented knowledge in Germany.

The „Flag of United Nature“ as it is named in contrast to the „Flag of United Nations“ symbolizes peace with our planet earth with a blue circular area on a white background. Numerous white stars on the circular area

represent the different forms of life in all their diversity. Humanity, symbolized by a yellow star, settles in equally among the totality of all life forms.

We humans are not just citizens of our state. We are also citizens of planet earth. We vouch for the entire biosphere and thus also for ourselves. May all nations; and also the United Nations; act out of this awareness. Our future hangs on a sovereign that is above nations and also above the United Nations. And the name of this sovereign is: United Nature.

Key aspects that went into the debates about the rights of nature on December 10<sup>th</sup> 2008 in the HAUS DER ZUKUNFT were ones I was already able to lay out at the "World Life Culture Forum" in Gyeonggi/South Korea. Invited as founder and representative of the HAUS DER ZUKUNFT, Hamburg, I held a presentation on June 21<sup>st</sup> 2006 on the topic: „From United Nations to United Nature – Harmonization between Human Civilization and Nature by Environmental Management and Biomimicry". At the end of the conference, the Flag of United Nature, donated by the HAUS DER ZUKUNFT, was carried through the enthralled assembly by a procession of students.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Winter, Georg (2006): From United Nations to United Nature – Harmonization between Human Civilization and Nature by Environmental Management and Biomimicry, presentation at the Life Economy Session of the World Life-Culture Forum in Gyeonggi, South Korea, 2006. In the conference transcription: world life-culture forum\_gyeonggi, Life Thought and Global Salim (Livelihood) Movement – For a New Civilization of East Asia and Pacific, WLCF2006 Paper Book, p. 383ff.

Let us raise the Flag of United Nature together and embark towards a reunification of nature and our technological civilization.

#### **11. 1993 – Biocracy discussed at an international economic forum for the first time**

As early as September 9<sup>th</sup> 1993, I introduced my biocracy idea to representatives of the economy as chairman of the International Network for Environmental Management, INEM. For this I chose the International Conference on ECO-Management in Tokyo, where I held the second keynote presentation, next to the President of the Science Council of Japan, Dr. Jiro Kondo. Our general topic was titled: „Towards an Industrial Agenda for Sustainable Development“. I had expanded the title of my presentation: „A Vision for the New Millennium“.

The hosts of the conference were INEM, the Eco-Life Center (the Japanese membership union of INEM), and the United Nations University. The conference was supported on the Japanese end by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), the Japan Environment Agency, and the Federation of Economic Organizations (Keidanren). On an international level, the conference was backed by the International Council for Local Environment Initiatives, the International Organization for Standardization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Foundation for Earth Environment, and the Global Environment Forum.

Important cornerstones on the way toward an environmentally conscious society and economy had been set: the Stockholm Conference of 1972, which

brought environmental problems to the awareness of the global public; the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) from the year 1987, which brought the concept of sustainable development into the public eye; the World Industry Conference on Environmental Management, WICEM II, 1991 in Rotterdam, preceded by WICEM I in Versailles; and finally in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro, the International Industry Conference on Sustainable Development with the ratification of Agenda 21, which in chapter 30 calls on industry to be fully committed partners in the realization of sustainable development.

The International Industry Conference on Sustainable Development, which took place in 1992 in the context of the Global Forum of UNCED in Rio de Janeiro, was organized by INEM in cooperation with its Brazilian membership union SIGA. This Industry Conference was the main contribution of global industry to the Global Forum, where a cross-sector exchange of opinions between different societal groups of the world took place, including labor unions, environmental initiatives, women's associations, youth groups, religious communities, scientific associations, and indigenous peoples.

The International Conference on Eco-Management, which took place in Tokyo in 1993, also stands in this context of economic history. It was the first international conference to follow the Global Forum of UNCED in which a conclusion could be drawn in terms of how far industrialists in the different countries had implemented, or were willing to implement, Agenda 21. While Dr. Jiro Kondo was invited as an exponent of science in broadest terms, I had received the invitation to the presentation as a representative of the international movement for environmentally conscious business management.

As of 1972, starting in the industrial enterprise Ernst Winter & Sohn, which at the time was a family business, I had developed and introduced the first integrated system of environmentally conscious business management, which focuses all areas and levels of business not only on economic success, but also on environmental goals. My 1987 book on environmentally conscious business management, based on practical experience, was translated into 12 languages and was the first on the topic in all countries. The European Union and the Environmental Program of the United Nations supported the distribution of the book on the Winter Model.

To create a nation-wide exchange of experience, in 1984 the “Bundesdeutscher Arbeitskreis für Umweltbewusstes Management” (B.A.U.M. e.V.; “German Workgroup for Environmental Management”) was brought to life. In 1991, B.A.U.M. e.V. – the earliest and largest environmental initiative of the economy – was, in the presence of the King of Sweden, taken up into the “500 Role of Honor” of the Environmental Program of the United Nations. B.A.U.M. e.V., which today counts over 500 companies as members, celebrated its 25-year anniversary in 2014.

Following the example of B.A.U.M. e.V. several business associations for environmentally conscious management have been founded in different countries with my help and in 1991, banded together to form the “International Network for Environmental Management” (INEM e.V.). I received the “Change the World best Practice Award” of the Club of Budapest in 2003 for the initiation and development INEM e.V., which already counted 19 membership unions in 1993, at the time of the Industry Conference in Tokyo. At that time (and later until

2004) I served as Chairman of B.A.U.M. e.V. and INEM e.V.

In my presentation in Tokyo in 1993, I postulated four possibly simultaneous courses of development of the global movement for environmentally conscious management. By the year 2000, the developments had not occurred on the scale I had deemed possible in 1993. Now in the year 2014, however, it has become clear that progress is being made along those four courses of development, even though they are still much too hesitant. My exact words in Tokyo were:

“(1) The number of environmentally oriented businesses will reach a critical mass. Large and medium-sized businesses will practice environmentally oriented management following an integrated system. Through successful example, these businesses will find imitators in their respective branches. In a sort of chain reaction, environmentally conscious management will spread globally to other businesses.

(2) The quality of environmentally conscious business management will experience a quantum leap. Pioneer businesses in different countries will cooperate with scientists to develop and successfully test a new model for environmentally conscious business management. This new generation of environmentally oriented business management will allow for an increase in value creation while simultaneously offering a drastic reduction of absolute resource usage and absolute strain on the environment.

(3) In numerous countries environmentally oriented businesses will greatly surpass their competitors in productivity and market share. State leaders will have introduced measures to realize environmental protection in all ministerial areas. These states will see existing or emerging economic frameworks that will bring about a strong entrepreneurial self-interest in environmentally oriented

business management. Due to the taxation of energy and scarce resources, and due to extremely high costs of waste disposal, enterprises that save energy and minimize waste will have an extreme cost advantage. Because of the simultaneous easing of taxation on human labor, the pressure on businesses to cut jobs will have been reduced.

(4) The majority of management schools will promote an ethos of fairness not only toward humans, but toward all forms of life. The ethical demand for fairness toward all forms of life in the biosphere will at the same time be understood as a demand of practical rationality for the survival of humanity. "To preserve life, to foster life, to bring developable life to its highest value" (Albert Schweitzer) – This threefold demand will be recognized as a guideline for the thoughts and actions of broad circles of enterprise. Environmentally conscious business management and environmentally conscious state administration will be increasingly understood as the result of a lifestyle conscious of the internal world (internally conscious environmental consciousness)."

In the section "Visions of a new form of state in the new millennium" of my presentation in Tokyo in 1993, I developed the idea of biocracy in the following words:

„In many countries today the form of state is democracy. The populace is the sovereign and enforces its will through a free election of political representatives. Democracy takes every human seriously as a citizen, even if they are poor, simple, fragile, or modest. It gives every citizen equal power through the right to vote.

#### 1 *Further development of Democracy*

Democracy too is a form of state that requires further development. It must take seriously not only every human, but every living thing, a nettle as much as a cherry tree, a

frog as much as a horse. For every living thing has its dignity and plays its part and in some way contributes to the preservation of the balance of nature. Plants and animals can't put in their vote in an election. Therefore, the state must ensure that the existential interests of these living creatures also be given political effectiveness.

To achieve this, we must utilize different instruments of state and civil law: For example, the security of the natural necessities of life for humans, animals and plants must be given constitutional importance. The environmental minister must, just like the financial minister, be given a veto right in governmental decisions. Environmental associations must receive the right to sue those who damage the environment to cease and desist, or to pay reparations. By these and other means the state must ensure that the existential interests of all living things be represented in governmental decision-making, in jurisprudence, and in every day economic activity.

## 2 *The break-through to biocracy*

Human democracy is in reality an oligarchy of the "naked apes". Measured in terms of biomass, humans represent a minority among the living creatures, and this minority overrules the disenfranchised majority. True democracy is only possible if we acknowledge that the "populace of earth" consists not only of humans, but also of plants and animals, in short, of the totality of all living creatures.

Shouldn't we make the totality of all living creatures the sovereign of the state? Shouldn't governments understand themselves as the carriers of a mandate of all living creatures and act accordingly? Shouldn't we develop human democracy into a democracy of all living creatures? We must achieve a break-through to a new form of state, namely biocracy. Human history has known monarchy, aristocracy, oligarchy and democracy. Shouldn't our time of increased endangerment of all life be ripe for biocracy?

In the biocratic parliament – metaphorically speaking – trees are equally entitled to a seat and a say. We should listen closely to the trees. We may find that they represent our true interests better than we do ourselves. Either we humans reach a democracy of all life, namely biocracy, or our species will one day end under the dictatorship of death. If we reach for our visions, we will realize all that is possible. If we only aim for what is possible, we will be caught in routine and then our civilization will have no chance of surviving in the long run.”

## **12. Final highlighting of current initiatives**

The introductory statement on the current situation under point (1) above concerned larger global interrelations in a rather abstract way. Going back to this point, the following final comments should be dedicated specifically to current initiatives:

- In order to more strongly include the “voice of nature” in the current lively debate about the energy revolution, I funded and published a pamphlet concerning this question: Wicke, L./Schulte von Drach, M.C.: The energy revolution. More climate protection, but socially and economically viable, published by Georg Winter, Neumünster and Hamburg 2013.
- The HAUS DER ZUKUNFT in Hamburg is planning a conference for the end of November 2015 which is primed by the following series of texts:

**“RIGHTS OF NATURE / BIOCRACY” IN THE  
DIMENSION OF THE ECONOMY.**

The development of the concept of biocracy towards a fertile transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary term is to be further funded and pushed forward.

- In this context the Biocracy Prize I founded will, following the conference, also be opened to works in the areas of economic and educational sciences. An opening for the natural sciences had already taken place the last time the prize was awarded in 2013.<sup>7</sup>
- The last raising of the Flag of United Nature occurred on May 18<sup>th</sup> 2014 at the cultural train station of Ottensoos near Nuremberg. Professor Volker Stahlmann, in the company of his spouse Renate Kirchhoff Stahlmann and numerous guests, raised the flag on a high flagpole in the entrance area of the train station.

Further raisings of the flag both in and outside the country will follow.

### **13. Literature**

Expert discussion about the rights of Nature in the HAUS DER ZUKUNFT, in Hamburg, on 10.12.2008, Documentation, Winter Family Archive Sign. B 82

<sup>7</sup> Award winner was Professor Berndt Heydemann, former environmental minister of the state of Schleswig-Holstein, in his function as chairman of the "Zukunftszentrum Mensch-Natur-Technik-Wissenschaft" (ZMTW; "Future Center Humanity-Nature-Technology-Science") in Nieklitz, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

Schweitzer, Albert (1988): Die Ehrfurcht vor dem Leben, Grundtexte aus fünf Jahrzehnten, ("Reverence of nature, basic texts from five decades") published by Hans Walter Bähr, 5<sup>th</sup>, unchanged edition, C.H.Beck, Munich (Becksche Reihe; Band 255)

Seidel, Eberhard (2012) (editor): Georg Winter – Pionier der umweltbewussten Unternehmensführung ("Georg Winter – Pioneer of environmentally conscious business administration"), Metropolis publishing company, Marburg 2012

Winter, Georg (1983): Qualität als unternehmerischer Unternehmensgrundsatz ("Quality as an entrepreneurial axiom of enterprise"), in: Deutsches Pfarrerblatt, 12 (1983), P. 592-596

Winter, Georg (1987) (editor): Das umweltbewusste Unternehmen. Ein Handbuch der Betriebsökologie mit 22 Check-Listen für die Praxis ("The environmentally conscious enterprise. A handbook of business ecology with 22 checklists for practice"), C.H.Beck, Munich

Winter, Georg (1988): Business and the Environment, McGraw-Hill Book Company

Winter, Georg (1989): Enterprise et Environnement ("Business and the Environment"), McGraw Hill Paris

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