**For a more just world.**

**An interview with Franky Müller from The Zeitgeist Movement**

<http://www.huffingtonpost.de/johannes-heinle/eine-zukunft-ohne-marktwirtschaft-franky-muller-vom-zeitgeist-movement-im-interview_b_7157358.html>

**Ben, Franky and Max are members of the global Zeitgeist Movement. The Zeitgeist Movement proposes a fundamental change of values in the context of the economic premise. The predominant theme is addressing the grave inherent structural deficiencies of our socioeconomic system and the proposal of suitable solutions, such as sustainability projects or alternative educational approaches. The participants of this interview answered the mostly critical questions independent from each other.**

**Heinle: Hello to the three of you! It's nice that we could make this interview happen. I myself heard of your Movement for the first time in 2011. At that time, I was still living in Panama where I saw many social and ecological upheavals and consequently began thinking about social issues for the first time. Without being too informed, I had the subtle feeling that a number of things are currently going wrong and that the Zeitgeist Movement finally acknowledged them.**

**I wanted to talk to people from the Movement, familiarize myself with the topics and become involved. Unfortunately, my knowledge of The Zeitgeist Movement is still limited to the movie trilogy, which, as I know, cannot be equated with the movement, and unfortunately so much happened in Panama that I didn't have the time to learn about it and its ideas.**

**But now, I finally have the opportunity. Before we start with the actual questions about the movement, I would like to ask you to introduce yourselves and tell us how you got involved with The Zeitgeist Movement.**

**Müller:** My name is Franky Müller. I am a trained industrial management assistant and project manager, and evidently I, with a growing number of people, share the realization that the majority of today's social problems are somehow always connected to money and that therefore, something seems to be fundamentally wrong with the way we run our economy.

The ideas and concepts propagated by the Zeitgeist Movement led me to transform this insight into an understanding of what the root causes of our global and social issues are and what steps could be taken to ensure that these problems are solved. I became aware of the Movement in June 2009 through the "Zeitgeist" film series, which by thorough analysis of complex content managed not only to point out the problems but also to identify possible resolutions.

I have answered my own critical questions about the Zeitgeist Movement phenomenon through continuous research over time, and thus recognized the uniqueness and potential inherent within it. In this still very young movement, which already exists in 70 countries under this name, I volunteer as a coordinator for project groups all over Germany, organizing and moderating various online and offline meetings, and also participate in the global project group administration.

**Heinle: What does the term "Zeitgeist" mean?**

**Müller:** "Zeitgeist" is a borrowed word, which was taken from German as one of the 10 most popular loan words in the English language. It stands the dominant thought and feeling of a period.

According to Wikipedia, the term refers to "the intellectual fashion or dominant school of thought that typifies and influences the culture of a particular period in time" [taken from Wikipedia EN]. Coupled with the term "Movement", which means motion or change, the "Zeitgeist Movement" is therefore a movement that seeks to change the current, not very life-supporting, Zeitgeist.

**Heinle: How would you sum up, in one sentence, the central theme of the Zeitgeist Movement?**

**Müller:** The central theme of TZM [short for The Zeitgeist Movement] can be described as a logic based, self-reflecting train of thought. This train of thought is further presented in the book "The Zeitgeist Movement Defined: Realizing a New Train of Thought" [1], which was written by the international lecture team. TZM is hence not loyal to neither persons nor institutions, but solely to this train of thought while focusing substantially on creating awareness and education.

This is also the reason why we do not speak of any official membership in TZM in the classical sense and why membership is difficult to determine. To express it with a parable: it's like the mentality of a healthy diet, which can neither be exclusively tied to individuals and/or institutions, but is simply based on the logic that poison in our food affects our well-being.

**Heinle: Second, I associate with the Western understanding of politics also a form of democracy. Democracy always has a very strong individual and ideological dimension. This means that different people impart their respective desire for multiculturalism or a dominant culture expression through their vote and so have a say in the destiny of their nation.**

**When it comes to science it's different. Science, descriptive and probing, assumes that there is only one true answer to a specific question, such as integration. Does the idea of a scientific method for social concern not lead us away from a pluralistic and democratic society and instead bring us to a form of aristocracy, in which only scientists regarded as capable have a voice?**

**Müller:** Indeed, a democracy can give the single individual a voice and thus promote a pluralistic expression. Democracy as a form of government, however, represents today, as in the past, just one part of our socioeconomic system and should, consequently, not be considered detached from other social regulators.

For example, in a monetary system, [true] democracy does not exist, because the more money one has the more advantages one can buy.

In addition, our current form of democracy is always dependent on the opinions of people who participate in it. An opinion reflects the result of an individual's reaction to their surrounding culture. One can therefore speak of an opinion as the interpretation of the environment in which one's particular character and cognitive capacity also play a role. Thus, an opinion is often also subject to a strong form of speculation by the person expressing themselves.

Democracy in itself does not automatically lead to a pluralistic society - quite the opposite, because what actually creates a working democracy is education. If this education doesn't include an understanding of the processes that promote human well-being, and consequently does not respect the laws of nature that enable this well-being, then democracy is simply a process that guarantees that we are no better governed than we deserve.

Science, however, reinforces its methods based on facts rather on opinions. The core of the scientific method is skepticism and refutability. Its purpose is to approach the identifiable "truth" as closely as possible. The only thing that science generally regards as axiomatic, is the fact that virtually everything can change when new information is identified and understood.

The scientific method, as proposed in its application to social concern by the Zeitgeist Movement, therefore includes, with its focus on the laws of nature, indisputable variables, regardless of any opinions we have about them. In other words, majority opinions are inferior to the law of nature. It does not matter how many people decide to go against the laws of gravity; nature doesn't care, nature isn't a democracy.

In contrast to the current situation, sociology is also included as a science which can precisely explain that pluralism in a society is as important as biodiversity for our survival on this planet. I see no contradiction here.

It's important to note, that the proposal of a scientific approach to social concern, which is achieved by rational consensus, is far more free of *ego* than today's political methods, as long as science is not subject to financial conditions in which the financially strongest dictates the direction of research.

Furthermore, the Zeitgeist Movement does not endorse a technocracy, in which scientists rule over people. The question of an aristocracy therefore isn't relevant because the question is not who makes the decisions; the question is with which methodology decisions are concluded. There is no loyalty to groups or ideologies, just loyalty to methods that have stood the test of time.

**Heinle: When applying the scientific method to economic issues, you stress the importance of taking into account the finite resource capacity of the earth. This is called a resource-based economy and is one of your main concerns.**

**That initially sounds great, as everyone knows that we are living at the expense of the environment and future generations and that this shouldn't be the case. But I also have a few more questions for you. First, I wonder how you want to base the economy on the shortage of goods, if you do not know the degree of scarcity of said goods?**

**If we had listened, for example, to the Club of Rome40 years ago, when they had predicted the drying up of the last oil wells before the turn of the millennium, we would have probably made wrong and hasty conclusions with a resource-based economy and lost much of industry and prosperity.**

**A resource-based economy may formally be engineered in an ingenious way, but what does it matter if we cannot feed it with the correct data since we simply don't know how many resources are available to us?**

**Müller:** That's a good point, for it's precisely the first step in the transitive direction into a resource-based economic model: The acquisition of data about all natural available resources and their physical, verified state including all features of their use in terms of society and the environment.

We have today far more sophisticated ways of doing this than ever before. An intelligent management of the earth's resources also requires the maintenance of a database, which algorithmically weighs the positive and negative consequences and makes suggestions accordingly.

Hence we computer technology that allows this data to be collected consistently, whereby we speak of a continuously flowing process that constantly evolves parallel to our level of scientific knowledge.

It should be noted that our exponential use of fossil fuels is in some aspects the driver of our prosperity, but its use and harmful consequences such as the pollution of the air, render it inapt in the context of social concerns. Especially since we have an enormous potential of alternatives.

Today's prosperity would have even been possible with a considerably environmentally friendlier use of energy. It is only the inherent logic of the financial sector, in which we live, which precludes the use of renewable energy sources, because the market model in its structure simply excludes certain elements. A very primitive myopia is at play here which states: Resources are simply there and can be used, regardless of the consequences. Period.

The pursuit of profit maximization thus automatically entails a certain narrow-mindedness because all expenses count only up to the sale of an item and thus only to the collection of one's profit. Whether one's actions have negative consequences on people and the environment, doesn't concern the market player as long as the profit adds up.

Through this practice alone, our social understanding of what we specifically shouldn't do has progressed, for the problems that we see when we look around the world should be evidence enough.

**Heinle: How exactly does a resource-based economy function and why is it so important?**

**Müller:** To put it short: A resource based economy is not based on the movement of money and the associated dynamics; rather on truly objective scientific resource management and allocation.

It is strategically seeking to enable an equitable distribution of all goods and services to meet the needs of the entire global human population, while ensuring maximum environmental sustainability for generations to come.

In this model society itself is the mirror of nature, hence this social system can extendedly be termed a "Natural Law Resource Based Economy." Therefore, we're talking about an adaptive, socioeconomic system actively derived from direct physical reference to the governing scientific laws of nature.

Why is it so important? Well, as mentioned above, all individual desicions today are based on the premise of personal advantage and/or profit maximization.

Simply put, we are living in a dog-eat-dog world in which people are taking advantage of each other to protect themselves and their interests. Although no gene for greed exists, this behaviour is dismissed as merely natural.

The plain fact is that human behaviour is shaped by environmental conditions, and a culture built upon self-interest and egotism is the logical result of times of scarcity in which people had to compete for basic things.

Money is the medium which represents access to the necessities of life for people, and money always is scarce. So it's not hard to calculate why the majority of corruption, crime, and hence our social problems in general, are happening in correlation with the medium of money. As soon as we focus on the steady increase of efficiency in an economic context, rather than on the circulation of money, money as a medium of exchange will be phased out.

In a resource based economy, all goods and services are freely accessible without the use of money, credit cards, cheques, or any debt and coercion. Only our current scarcity conditioned and egocentric value system stands in our way.

In a resource based economic model, the question as a basis for any personal decision therefore is not anymore "How much profit can I squeeze from something?", but rather "How do my actions affect my fellow human beings and the environment?" Contributing to society is no longer based on bigoted, selfish views and interests of personal gain. Money loses its meaning in this as it has become obsolete as a fundamental driving force.

Instead, a resource based civilization, through its systems theory approach, focusses on bio-psychosocial sustainability as well as a dynamic balance. The resources of the Earth are seen as a common heritage of all people, which is in direct contrast with the current procedure, where the global resources are being exploited by a select few and we therefore ruthlessly exploit nature.

We are virtually stealing from the future, selling it in the present and calling it GDP (Gross Domestic Product). But the culture of future society will have finally understood that the fundamental cooperation regarding the sharing of resources and ideas brings forth a more prosperous, sustainable and stable society, unlike what the market ethics of scarcity and competition as per the current model could ever have surmised.

And as complex as it may sound for the inexperienced, this approach is nothing but the more sophisticated strategy of astronauts who colonise a planet. You fly through space in your spaceship, encounter a new planet, and there are simply no manmade concepts like money, religion or national borders.

You inspect the planet for all necessary resources and deploy your entire technological know-how to support yourself and your team with the goal of maximum human flourishing.

With this mindset regarding our planet, while expressed very simply, The Zeitgeist Movement would like a change of our current values towards a world that is not limited by politics, money and elitism which destroy our Earth for profit.

We want to ensure through our existing technological capability that every human being is fed, clothed, housed and has access to clean renewable energy and a relevant education without having to "earn it".

**Heinle: Let's assume that in the near future a resource-based economy is globally established and that it is working, that is, assuring social and economic sustainability. Certainly some people wouldn't accept, or even understand, that they need to reduce their standard of living on behalf of people who haven't even been born yet. How would you deal with those people in your social system? Doesn't the sovereign and collectivistic goal of sustainability lead to a form of eco-dictatorship, or is there another way? Can the aspect of sustainability alone, if it comes to the need of it, justify an eco-dictatorship?**

**Müller:** With an increasing understanding of our own integrity as humans on this planet, the understanding that it is only as good as that of our fellow human beings and the environment additionally grows. In short: a human is a social being who cannot survive on their own.

Sociological studies like the "Equality Trust" [2] by professors Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett clearly provide evidence that social sustainability can only be achieved through a rather equal society. This can only be achieved with a balanced economy based on cooperation, sharing and empathy. Therefore the question of the future is not about possession, but instead about strategic access to the necessities of life.

A competitive attitude inevitably ensures that there are winners and losers, and out of these positions arise characteristics that we either call greed or envy. This results - among other things - in the social completely imbalanced and disconnected relationships that have been revealed in the latest Oxfam report [3], which says that 1% of the world's population currently own more than 50% of the global wealth.

This social inequality has a subversive effect on society and in particular on public health. More and more people are born into extreme poverty with no access to medical care, even though we have the technological possibilities to eliminate these poor circumstances. But this represents yet another result of market logic, under which a problem won't be solved if the outcome doesn't yield a profit.

Gandhi once hit the nail on the head by stating "The world has enough for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed". So it is not about patronizing people or forcing something onto them to achieve social sustainability. However, on the path of our own survival, we have to dismiss the notion that a value system, as is prevalent in a market model, in which everyone exclusively pursues an advantage to their personal benefit, generates anything positive for the overall picture.

It is therefore necessary to identify the factors that reward and reinforce this behaviour, as they are the fundamental psychological drivers of our economy: inequality, scarcity, bigoted self-interest, exploitation and competition. Unless these are changed so that the system begins to reward cooperation, efficiency and sustainability, nothing will really change.

In a sociological state, in which everything is based on one's own gain over that of others, what we see today combined with all resulting problems is just "business as usual".

Combined with this insight, The Zeitgeist Movement advocates a necessary transformation of our values. Self-interest, conditioned through exemplified reward strategies, should therefore transform into an interest in society, if we wish to survive.

However, this transformation can never be achieved with violence or coercion, but purely through understanding. Hence the Movement communicates using exclusively non-violent communication methods. Something such as peace, which can emerge from an even-tempered society, can in any case never develop with violence or coercion.

**Heinle: In your visions for the future you like to refer to the so-called Venus Project. They promise a compatibility of sustainability and universal technological prosperity.**

**In today's world, these two central themes are individually regarded as utopian and much less as compatible. How do you want to guarantee the citizens of the world both sustainability and prosperity? Why do we still see a contradiction in this combination?**

**Müller:** Assuming today's modern level of knowledge, I see no contradiction here between sustainability and prosperity, which is generated by technology.

First of all, sustainability does not simply result from abstinence, but rather from consideration, implementation, the security and protection of all parameters that foster human wellbeing - it is merely necessary to utilize these parameters across the generations.

Our prosperity effectively emerges as part of our constant tendency to want to execute working steps accruing within society, ever more efficiently - provided, we know how to use the resulting free time meaningfully and intelligently, ideally for resolving other existing problems.

Moreover, human innovation, and therefore our technological progress, make it possible that we can nowadays accomplish "more and more with less and less". Instead of filling a gully with rocks, we have learned to build better and better bridges which require far less material.

Even Henry Ford's production line serves as a good example of how decreasing material input was increasing efficiency. And these days we have learned to transmit our telecommunication, from telephone to satellite, rather than by cable through radio waves.

Imagine you would receive all this copious data every day, from website views, emails, right up to text messages, one by one in a conventional letter for 60 cents each. Nowadays we can cost-effectively accomplish many things with far less material consumption.

Apart from Jacque Fresco (The Venus Project), the architect, constructor and designer Richard Buckminster Fuller has had a big impact on the philosophy of the Zeitgeist Movement as well, since he described in great detail the tendency of modern technology, which leads to ever smaller, lighter and more efficient machines and technological applications respectively. He called this economical principle, a simple input-output-relation, ephemeralization. [4]

Ephemeralization represents an unavoidable trend in human development. What we call Utopia today will be just as ridiculous to the people in the future, as would our current attempt to explain to hunting and gathering stone age people why planes fly, how ships weighing tons cross the oceans or how we now think about someone on the other side of the world and are able to contact them within seconds.

History and technology therefore have no regard for society or individual opinions, but rather to keep developing. And we constantly have to prepare to face the future. The term Utopia therefore often merely results from our current static views, whereby we believe to already know everything while completely ignoring evolution. This, coupled with the assumption that sustainability implies some kind of sacrifice, explains the present-day contradiction.

**Heinle: But if your concepts, for example the automation of labour, are supposed to be so much more efficient than the conventional ones, why haven't they yet been established on the free market?**

**Müller:** As mentioned above already, the free market entails that there are winners and losers. The winners thereby always try to keep their power, to secure and further expand, which leads us to the current fact that only 147 corporations control the entire global economy. [5]

Furthermore, it is mainly these big players on the market that quickly harness these innovative technologies for themselves and for the most part within the framework of their position of power. Admittedly, the majority of the corporations do have the tendency to automate, as it simply makes sense, albeit they cannot manage the investments as fast and as easy as the big guys.

And yet they do it. This happens in the course of acting under the pressure of cost-efficiency the corporations are subjected to.

Unfortunately in our current model of the economy, it is observable that there have to be new problems arising continuously, so that money can be earned in solving them. This in turn creates new jobs. Our current economy is primarily based on the circulation of money. The more money circulates, the better for the economy.

This pattern of money-flow must not stop or be slowed down considerably if the society as we know it is to keep functioning. In this context there are three main actors on the stage of economy: the employee, the employer and the consumer.

The global market system is based on the assumption that there will always be enough demand for products in society to always have enough money in circulation which can maintain the consumption process. And the faster the consumption rate, the higher the so-called economic growth, and so it keeps going.

Money as an incentive, however, is only limited as a motivator for repetitive, monotonous tasks; which are those that can be replaced by machines. And thus the manufacturing industry has in the course of cost-efficient adversity a continuous interest in rationalizing workplaces away to save personnel costs through automation.

The catch that is being overlooked in this matter is: The more you automate to save costs, the more people will be laid off and the more public purchasing power will decrease. That means that companies can produce everything at reduced rates, but fewer people will effectively have money to buy something, no matter how cheap it has become.

The bottom line is that the "labour for income" game is slowly approaching the end. In the industrial countries these days, the service sector is regarded as the last real contact point which employs more than 80% of the workforce. Nevertheless, this sector is meanwhile coming under pressure by automated kiosks, restaurants and even shops.

Technological unemployment, a term coined by John Maynard Keynes in 1930 as a "contradiction of capitalism" [6], is truly a very real phenomenon. To this end, the documentary "Will Work For Free" (available free on the internet) is fervently recommended to anyone who is interested, which illustrates the current state of affairs in this area very well.

Consequently, everybody should primarily ask themselves the simple question: Should the focus of a society be on creating jobs or on creating prosperity?

**Heinle: Private property, according to what you/TZM have in mind, may not be scrapped completely, but nevertheless lose its importance bit by bit and finally make way for public, strategic access to things, free of charge. To me it sounds like a leftist demand. Although I readily suspect that you don't want to let yourselves be integrated into a liberal-left movement, right?**

**Müller:** That's right. The Zeitgeist Movement doesn't view the classic form of politics as suitable to solve social problems. The majority of our problems are technologically solvable. A circumstance that makes politicians as the leading elite of a society obsolete.

Politicians simply aren't technological experts. How could they then solve the problems of society that are of a technological nature? Most politicians merely have a legal background, which is semantic manipulation and nothing else. They are not qualified to change anything, and they will ultimately ask the scientists about the solutions to problems.

Whether a society functions is not a question of the political attitude, but instead, like explained above, a question of observing all parameters that make a society function.

Society is a technological invention, so to speak. And the most efficient method to optimize human health, production, distribution, urban infrastructure, etc. can be found in the fields of science and technology - not in politics or in the financial system. A society simply functions the same way as, let's say, a plane, and there just is no "left" or "right" way to build a plane.

The concept of ownership, on the other hand, is an invention that stems from times of scarcity. If, among other things, as part of an economic philosophy, the planet is competitively being "privatized" (a term which btw. in Latin equates to "to rob" [7]), then the logical consequence is that eventually an institution comes up with the concept of ownership in order to settle the constantly arising disputes. From this point on it was determined who owns what. The people therefore claim property because it is a legal form of protection.

However, the concept of ownership is not a purely nationalistic, free market economic or capitalistic idea, but simply an ancient sentiment, derived from necessity by the generations preceding us, who were continually living in conditions of scarcity. If there was no scarcity, there would be no sane reason for ownership.

These days it's a fact that most of the actual problems that were necessary for the development of the current economic system, are no longer overwhelming us due to the drastic progress of science and technology. Today we have the possibility to move into a new paradigm that hinder negative side effects, like constant war, human exploitation, poverty, as well as ecological destruction.

As you have already correctly noted, strategic access to the necessities of life makes the concept of private property obsolete. For example, in our part of the world, due to the relatively strategic access to water and with the help of a technological invention called the water tap, there are far less wars than in other parts of the Earth where water is scarce. Likewise, we as humans have direct strategic access to the air and light, which we humans need, as it surrounds us anyways.

To clarify it with another example: The first person who had arrived to the sight of Native Americans and said "That apple tree over there is mine!" would have been ridiculed. It was still understood that the mere claim to property of an object is neither responsible for the growth processes of the tree nor for the ripening processes of the fruits.

Had someone else at the same time declared ownership of the light and the air, required for the trees survival, the apple tree owner would have had a massive problem. Fortunately, the sun cannot be imposed upon with such manmade concepts like property, as the consequence of a declaration of private property often imposes a lack of availability of an object towards the public, or rather, a tendency to now offer in exchange something else that had been freely accessible or available.

Where before apples were abundant, the one with ownership of the apple trees has a heightened level of disregard towards no longer existing apple trees that don't "belong" to him. The scarcity of external apple trees would make his trees increase in practical value. And thus, due to the concept of ownership, a shift in our interests and priorities within society arise.

In the natural world there is neither intellectual nor physical property. Even an idea that one has is always based on diverse individual information that other people have freely provided. Imagine where humanity would be if there had been patents on the method of fire lighting or the invention of the wheel.

The nonsense of the concept of property can only be justified in a market economy in which every market player initially thinks solely about himself and nothing else. Whether people who affiliate with a "left" disposition have also recognized the circumstances and tendencies that I described, remains insignificant in the scientific context, as it doesn't change the facts.

**Heinle: Like many subcultural associations, the Zeitgeist Movement criticizes the compound interest system vehemently. Could you explain where from your point of view the connection lies between compound interest and the misery in the world?**

**Müller:** Interest, along with compound interest, that is considered by many as the "root of all evil" is automatically legitimate itself as soon as you introduce money as a medium of exchange for goods and services in a society.

Money simply acts as commodity here, which, while also being subjected to supply and demand, is readily traded in a money market. The criticism of the Zeitgeist Movement therefore does not merely refer to interest, but ultimately to the entire monetary system, as its individual factors can hardly be separated.

The problem with monetary systems essentially lies in two things. The first thing is fractional reserve banking [8]: The banks create money out of thin air, whereas we have to give a legitimate form of property in return to get that money. As a consequence, all money is created out of debt. Hence, money equals debt, whether it is created through government bonds, building loan contracts or credit cards.

In other words: If in this moment all outstanding debts would be repaid, there would be not a single Euro in circulation anymore. The second thing is compound interest. If you borrow money, you have to pay back more than you borrowed. Therefore, a new need for the additional printing of money is being created, since in turn this need must be met.

I'll give an example: The national bank prints one Euro and lends it. After one year, 4% interest is due. How do I get those 4 cents which the bank hasn't created? Well, not at all. Thereby I am unable to pay until the bank prints the 4 cents and lends them to my neighbour, and I work for him to earn them. Subsequently, my neighbour has the same problem. In other words, there is always a slave who is unable to pay. The result of this practice is that two things are unavoidable: inflation and bankruptcy.

Regarding inflation: It is observable as a historic trend in nearly every country and its causes are easy to detect, namely the continual increase in the amount of money necessary to pay the interest and to keep the system going.

Concerning bankruptcy, this originates from debt collapse. This meltdown inevitably occurs when a person, a corporation or a state can no longer repay the interest.

From the economic perspective, however, the whole issue has a good side as well, for debts generate pressure. Debts bring forth wage slaves. A person in debt is more likely to be prepared to accept lower wages than someone who has no debts; thereby they become a cheap commodity. Corporations think it's phenomenal when they have a multitude of people with meagre financial scopes at their command. This idea can also be expanded to whole nations.

The World Bank and the IMF, which basically act as stakeholders for transnational corporations, grant countries that are in trouble gigantic loans with very high interest rates and as soon as the countries are deeply indebted and insolvent, austerity measures are implemented and the corporations invade, set up exploitative enterprises and seize the natural resources. From a market economy perspective this in turn is regarded as being "efficient".

And no matter what you will hear from politicians or the media, in essence they do not talk about this principal fact; instead, as a solution to these problems, welfare programs are being cut. We then hear phrases such as "We have to tighten our belts" while freedoms are being limited, etc.

The practice of printing money out of thin air and lending it out to the public and the government via commercial banks in return for interest/fees, which don't even exist, ought to be the central subject of debate of every country. Hence, the problem is structural. And this is my point.

Consequently, one can't just be against money, for it is important to consider human evolution and understand it, and consequently to also understand the reason why money was established in the first place. Money had a practical utility for a long time and it yielded efficiency and progress for mankind.

Nevertheless, in the face of emerging developments in the technological sector, it simply doesn't serve us anymore in this day and age. The Zeitgeist Movement would like to eventually outgrow the monetary system and not just abolish it. Nowadays the monetary system merely achieves the complete opposite of its actual purpose - it is anti-economic, so to speak.

Ultimately, everything revolves around the simple question whether the people comprehend the definition of economy, which means "the managing of a household": economy [9] as the translation for the Old Greek word oíkonomos (from Old Greek oíkos 'house' and nomos, 'law' or 'rule'), therefore the head of the household or even the landlord.

The word "economy" stems from this. Here in the actual sense it is therefore about the intelligent utilization of resources, about increasing the efficiency, meaning avoiding waste and not just about measuring the circulation of a medium called money, and attaching interest to money, like we do today.

**Heinle: Zeitgeist activists like you aren't anti-semites, I'm sure about that. And you also pursue an important endeavour when you question the official mainstream stories and float alternative theories, with conspirative elements.**

**Unfortunately, what you are doing, like establishing conspiracy theories and criticizing the monetary system, can evoke anti-semitic resentments. Without having wanted it, an organization can find itself among anti-semitists.**

**Then the criticism of compound interest ends up in the proclamation that interest is an instrument of a few lazy, greedy Jews, like the Rothschild family, for the exploitation and subjugation of all of mankind. Or that the state of Israel is being blamed as the only culprit for the wars in our world. The online-community studiVZ even allowed the Zeitgeist groups to be deleted in 2009, because the information spread by them were seen as being "structurally anti-semitic".**

**So what can you do to not become a pool for anti-semitism?**

**Müller:** The beautiful thing about the Zeitgeist Movement is that logic dictates it.

If you focus on the official materials impartially, you can develop an understanding of what it is about. At once, it is easy to ascertain that we're speaking of a global movement that addresses the macro-economic level and hence not with the misconduct of individuals and organizations.

It's not a form of conspiracy theory that people get together in this system to combine their interests, but instead it is "business as usual". These people merely operate on the same basis, which means: "maximizing profits" irrespective of social and environmental repercussions.

Yet organizations like TZM with a rather more objective perspective are so far fairly uncommon, so that the communicated contents are hard to grasp for some people. Some people are not familiar with a scientific approach, including analysis, argumentation, evidence and conclusions.

So regarding many critics of the Zeitgeist Movement, they stand out for the most part because they act very subjectively as well as irrationally, and they refuse to familiarize themselves with the contents of TZM in any way. And this is also where the accusation of being anti-semitic enters the picture.

While in the USA, for example, critics of money as well as capitalism are usually labelled as "left-wing" and thus a communist, strangely enough, if you criticize the same topics in Germany, you're labelled as "rightwing" and thus as anti-semitic.

The accusation of anti-semitism is particularly a German phenomenon, and is therefore often, due to its illogicality, derided in the international context and the online meetings of The Zeitgeist Movement.

In this country, pretty much everyone who expressed themselves in public with their criticism of the existing monetary systems, was confronted with this accusation. I observed these defamations with stock exchange specialist Dirk Müller, with the Professor of Accounting at the TU Vienna, Franz Hörmann, as well as radio host Ken Jebsen.

It seems much more likely that it is all about pillorying certain people who oppose the status quo with their questions. The accusation of anti-semitism is like an accusation of heresy. It is based on deliberate public misrepresentation.

In the past this was called a calumny (defamation) and was prosecutable. Today it is part of the information war we have already been in for a longer time. Such accusations and misrepresentations are now quite deliberate and are by some people, who avoid a more precise analysis as well as proof, seen as solid arguments.

These are mainly the ones who still haven't understood the connection of a money-based market-economy to the successive destruction of our planet - we effectively speak of today's "the earth is flat" community. Those who utter these accusations, generally shun public debate. Here, clear evidence for a claim is often not being provided.

And since evidence can also not be provided against the contents of the Zeitgeist Movement, one just fabricates the accusation of "structural anti-semitism", along the lines of "it is not being said, but it is surely being implied".

The lesson is clear: What others think one is capable of doing is often more characteristic of them than of oneself. You only have to ask yourself whether these unsubstantiated conspiracy theories, defamations and accusations, which are being brought in by some so-called guardians of the status quo or the opposition of The Zeitgeist Movement, result either from malicious intent or childish naivete. None of these "critics" have so far worked up the energy to approach The Zeitgeist Movement in Israel with these accusations.

TZM, as a global movement, focusses on the application of the scientific method for social concerns. And fortunately uncorrupted science is the best medicine against any conspiracy theories and erroneous data.

**Heinle: Speaking of religion; for The Zeitgeist Movement, entities like religion, nations, races, classes, etc. are outdated terms. These would divide us and prevent us from reaching our full potential as mankind. I like the idea that humans let go of their beliefs and national thinking, and instead recognize themselves as cosmopolites.**

**John Lennon sings about them beautifully in his song "Imagine". The reasons for several people coming to the same conclusion, however, can be vastly different. Therefore, as a matter of interest:**

***Why do you object religion?***

**Müller:** I agree with your idea, and especially the notion of John Lennon, who reflects, among other things, the philosophy of the Zeitgeist Movement in a romantic way with his song "Imagine". Every idea first starts in the mind, and with that the imagination of something before it can physically manifest.

There is no wholesale argument against religion. But one should have learnt to separate religions from their institutions. Furthermore, in the history of mankind, these institutions have occasionally misused the teachings of religion to accumulate money and cement their power. But just like the monetary system, the evolution of religion has to be viewed within the overall context as well.

Religion emerged in the course of evolution due to a lack of understanding of the processes in nature. The people were unable to explain how, for example, cloud formation, ergo the weather, works. They made up gods and rituals, that also included sacrificial offerings, to appease these gods. Sometimes this happened with bloodshed, and even human sacrifices were not uncommon.

Nowadays we have learnt that different factors in our environment influence each other, which leads to the fact that weather changes. With a growing understanding and the application of science, our ignorance and therefore superstition has ceased.

Belief systems, too, should orient themselves to physical parameters and accept a subordinate role to the factors that let us humans thrive as the social beings that we are. If they don't do this, then we should not expect anything else but the insanity that is happening around us. Freedom of religion can sometimes even be dangerous. Can everyone just believe what they want without having to take responsibility for that?

If a person points a gun at your head in the belief that you have to die, are you then intolerant if you don't concede to this person's their belief?

Decisions in the context of a society should not be based on speculation, interpretation, let alone superstition. And ideologies that divide mankind, like religion, always needs a strong foundation within the community, with reference to its value, intent and social relevance.

We can only hope that with further increase of understanding about the processes in nature, religion will lose its materialism and its footing in superstition, and instead will move towards the useful field of philosophy. The more we learn, the more we know about our environment and its connection to humans, and the more we are able to solve our problems.

**Heinle: And why oppose sovereign nation states?**

**Müller:** Albert Einstein once said that nationalism is a childhood disease, virtually the measles of mankind. Throughout human evolution we have always lead wars for territories, fundamentally for resources. Therefore, artificial, manmade borders have been drawn on the surface of the planet, which have been shifting again and again in the course of the millenia.

National states don't just compete with each other in the economic context; it's a thought that one group of people is better than the other group of people. So if people think "Let's have each country develop for itself", it just doesn't work. For when the Russians and the Chinese experiment with nuclear material, the air still spreads across the whole world.

So it is difficult to truly work "independently". Even a tsunami, a hurricane or an avalanche doesn't care about the manmade borders. Put another way, and with the words of Jacque Fresco: "There are no 'negro problems' or 'Polish problems' or 'Jewish problems' or 'Greek problems' or 'women's problems' - there are only human problems!".

The Zeitgeist Movement advocates a global society and views mankind as one species, with the resources of the Earth being our common heritage. All artificial barriers therefore have to fall, so that humans can travel freely. But if competition is rewarded and scarcity generated to keep profits high, which we do both today primarily by means of the market economic philosophy, this tendency for conflicts will persist.

If we operate in a way that reduces stress and rewards calmness, a collaborative tendency among people will be attained. The wars in the world are therefore essentially a result of our socio-economic system, which include the concept of nation-states.

**Heinle: All of the polemic writings of the Zeitgeist Movement that I know have an optimistic view on the technological advancement of the future. I have read quite a few books and articles by futurologists. Some of them are already dead and the developments in the interim haven't proven them correct.**

**Therefore I feel that predictions for the future naturally have to have a low hit ratio, as there are just too many and countless unforseeable factors that also influence the world of tomorrow.**

**Why are you so sure that you are able to extrapolate the technological progress into the future?**

**Müller:** If you look around, you will quickly notice that almost everything that we use today is being produced with automation. Your shoes, your clothes, your home appliances, your car, and so on... all these products are made automatically by machines.

So we can't claim that society has remained unaffected by these big, technological advancements. We have made exponential progress in development and application of technologies. And automation will definitely continue. You just cannot stop technologies that simply make sense.

Automation of labour through technology is the foundation for substantial social transformation in human history: From the invention of the plough and the agricultural revolution, to the invention of the steam engine and the industrial revolution, through to today's information age, primarily due to the invention of advanced electronics and computers.

Of course, the question whether mankind will learn the understanding to apply and utilize their own technological potential and innovations in the interests as well as for the wellbeing of society remains unanswered. If society transitions into rewarding balance, abundance and cooperation, then our species might have a chance.

If not, then we're screwed, just like now, as due to our immaturity we are not capable of handling our own technological skills. Especially for this reason, The Zeitgeist Movement is committed to the necessary change of our values, so that all the electronic and mechanic wonders from science and technology improve people's lives - because for any other application they are nothing but garbage.

**Heinle: Let's focus on technology. You furthermore advocate a "social cyberneering" of humans. Is that actually still necessary? AI research progresses worldwide and is even subsidized by governments.**

**Müller:** The question remains whether a state within a monetary system is factually interested in the concerns of the people or whether they just act as support for the interests of profit-oriented corporations. In most cases, states and corporations go hand in hand nowadays, since even the state operates as a "corporation" in the market. So the fact that AI research is subsidized by the state is a far cry from saying that it would indicate something positive. In a consumer society, technology is systematically used to make people dependent; commercially successful goods stem for the most part from such mechanisms.

Though in general, it would be irresponsible not to utilize technological developments which, when applied for the benefit of society, would make sense. Many technologies, including AI, are already being used within societies in order to optimize their well-being.

Whether we use traffic lights, washing machines, telephones or the internet - everything boils down to these being predominantly technologies that by now even exhibit a certain intelligence. Whether one uses a calculator or calculates manually, should still be up to the individual.

Nevertheless, a resource based economy acknowledges the efficiency of mechanization and of technologies and accepts what they have to offer. It does not fight against them. Why? Because it is simply irresponsible as long as we still have an interest in efficiency and sustainability.

**Heinle: There are thousands of alternative thinkers and everyone promises me that they have the solution for almost all of our problems.**

**But their ingenious ideas are unrecognized by the "mainstream". The average person, though, neither has time nor the intellect to keep themselves busy with all these "promises of salvation". In closing, could you tell me an ultimate reason as to why your way is the right one?**

**Müller:** As hard as it may sound - nature is a dictatorship. And we can either obey and align with it or suffer the inevitable consequences. So the question is therefore whether humans learn to adapt to its laws and respect them. From the perspective of nature there is no right or wrong, only whether something works or doesn't.

The reality is that the current system of cyclic consumption (to maintain jobs), together with technological unemployment (to increase cost efficiency), combined with the natural limits of "growth" (limited resources) is exactly what defines the emerging "collapse" of our society, which we've been witnessing in progressive intensity. And this trend will not come to an end.

So the simple question remains, whether for the future we fight against each other or whether we cooperate in order to solve our common problems. A true society can only function with balance in the long run. The mechanism that permanently demands from people to having to do something, must vanish, so that the only important issue will be that you behave sustainably, and that society as well aims towards a required sustainable economy. This is the value system that composes a stable society.

Ultimately all social systems, irrespective of their political philosophy, their religious belief or social customs, are dependent on natural resources as the initial step in the direction of social functionality. The nation models that we see in our political environment, that is to say communism, fascism, socialism, capitalism, are all created concepts that bear not even the slightest relation to nature.

All these political constructs were created by thinkers who assumed that we live on a planet with unlimited resources. Not even one of these political philosophies takes into account that there could ever be a lack of something.

The don't bear the slightest relation to the carrying capacity of the Earth, to our ability to nurture ourselves, to our production facilities, to the methods of production, the distribution methods, to the ways society is oriented, and therefore to our own survival, to keep us healthy and thriving for the improvement of the human species.

As a society we have created an economic and a religious-philosophical structure which is completely detached from anything tangible and real. And these ideologies are what is going to destroy the human species and the planet. Mankind therefore has to contemplate their relationship with the Earth. As long as we don't do this, we're doomed!

**Heinle: Thank you very much for the interview.**

**Müller:** I have to thank you for your attention and your courage to actually confront new ideas. The ideas of the Zeitgeist Movement can only open the door; everyone has to walk through it themselves.

*[1]* [*http://www.thezeitgeistmovement.com/orientation*](http://www.thezeitgeistmovement.com/orientation)

*[2]* [*http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/*](http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/)

*[3]* [*http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/oxfam-warnung-fuer-ein-prozent-hat-mehr-als-der-rest-der-welt-1.2310647*](http://www.sueddeutsche.de/wirtschaft/oxfam-warnung-fuer-ein-prozent-hat-mehr-als-der-rest-der-welt-1.2310647)

*[4]* [*http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephemerisierung*](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ephemerisierung)

*[5]* [*http://www.theintelligence.de/index.php/wirtschaft/finanzen/3424-147-unternehmen-herrschen-ueber-die-weltwirtschaft.html*](http://www.theintelligence.de/index.php/wirtschaft/finanzen/3424-147-unternehmen-herrschen-ueber-die-weltwirtschaft.html)

*[6] John Maynard Keynes „Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren" (1930):* [*http://www.econ.yale.edu/smith/econ116a/keynes1.pdf*](http://www.econ.yale.edu/smith/econ116a/keynes1.pdf)

*[7]* [*http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privat*](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privat)

*[8]* [*http://www.focus.de/finanzen/boerse/das-kartell-verschwoerung-oder-hirngespinst-wie-die-us-notenbank-die-weltfinanz-manipuliert\_id\_3995856.html*](http://www.focus.de/finanzen/boerse/das-kartell-verschwoerung-oder-hirngespinst-wie-die-us-notenbank-die-weltfinanz-manipuliert_id_3995856.html)

*[9]* [*http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wirtschaft*](http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wirtschaft)