

# Peter Hartz, Job Revolution Frankfurter Allgemeine 2002

Alice Creischer  
Artist, curator and writer

Translated by Arte Traducciones

The book *Job Revolution* by Peter Hartz was published by *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and the Volkswagen corporation. Peter Hartz –Volkswagen's head of human resources– was the character mask for the reforms that would make Germany a low-wage country and a leading nation in exports. The reforms were carried out via the construction of a national consensus - aided by newspapers like FAZ, the heads of the churches, the unions, the political parties, think tanks like the Bertelsmann Stiftung –and, step by step, they came to substitute democratic decision-making.

*Job Revolution* was the manifesto of Agenda 2010 which now, as Agenda 2020, is threatening to erase the final traces of welfare state principles in the EU, as the “No Alternative” for economic growth and the reduction of unemployment. Agenda 2010, especially the Hartz IV laws, instigated the largest cuts in the German social security system since World War II.

*Job Revolution* was written as a manifesto on the new self-understanding of work in the global society. This means de-connnotations of “worker”, rather moving towards a sense of a globalized “work-holder”, as if you are a shareholder in your own work. The manifesto praises, euphorically, the brave new world of 24-hour jobs in a permanently competitive global society. It is that euphoria which Bourdieu described some years before as a „delirium“ when he was writing his warning “against Tietmeyer’s thinking” [1]. Hans Tietmeyer was the head of the German Bundesbank and an important promoter of the ideology of austerity which is now employed as a technique for colonizing entire national economies.

La “pensée Tietmeyer” exprime, sous les dehors du constat économique, une vision normative conforme à l’intérêt des dominants, vision conservatrice classique légitimée et rationalisée par des arguments ou un lexique d’allure économique. A cette mythologie rationalisée, dont on pourrait dire, avec Durkheim parlant de la religion, qu’il s’agit d’un “délire bien fondé”, il faudrait opposer des réfutations, par le raisonnement ou, plus simplement, par les faits. (Bourdieu, 1996)

The following paragraphs might show that such deliria often construct a semantic façade which subdues deep fear and underlying traumata, all in a way that is as fragile as it is euphoric.

What will the Job Revolution look like? We will do part of our work at home, another part in the office, and yet another on the road. [...] We will have various sources of income: projects, temporary contracts, profit sharing, time asset bonds, stock options, sharing of utilities, and –

increasingly– returns of investment in our own human capital.

[...]

We will provide services, ensure process flows, develop, advise, buy, sell and motivate. In short: we will provide all-round competence for our customers. We are all customers and, in turn, have customers.

And we will need to take more care regarding our future jobs. In the new, global job market, everyone can have them far more easily than in the past. It will often not matter whether these jobs are carried out in Germany or in New Zealand. Self-employment will increase and distances will become irrelevant.

[...]

The year has 8760 hours, but a workplace is only in use for 1200 to 1800 thereof. The reserves are therefore enormous, on the basis that every workplace could be used four to six times. Applying different shift and weekend models, the flexibility cascade (the number of shifts per day or week, culminating in continuous operation all year round) can tap that reserve of 6000 hours almost overnight.

[...]

The total number of hours that people work now account for less than 10% of their life. Assuming a life expectancy of 80 years (multiplied by 8760 hours a year) and a working life of 40 years, an average of 1400 hours a year on the job works out at just 8% of a worker's total lifetime. We can barely afford for that percentage to drop any further if we want the overall economic product to grow.

[...]

The great power blocs have vanished. Every point on the globe can be reached in a single day's travel. Cell phones ring on the Great Wall of China. Office equipment is portable enough to fit inside a trouser pocket. Indian teenagers surf the Web in Bangalore. The world has shrunk to the proportions of a single, vast, shopping mall. [...] Everything can be produced, bought, financed and marketed anywhere; and the same goes for tapping information and know-how. Competition standards are no longer set locally or nationally, but globally. Every job has a competitor. Markets have become buyers' markets. Prices are determined not by production costs, technology and profit expectations, but by what buyers are prepared to pay and customer expectations. [...] Today, companies can only reach success from a market-oriented perspective. A successful company has the customer in mind every step of the way.[...]

[...]

Every job has a customer.

[...]

The 24-hour world never sleeps. Getting up in the morning anywhere in the world, we will find that the context of our job has changed overnight. That is the existential challenge facing every local job. A market slump, a monetary crisis, a stock market dip, a problem with a product, a service gap - bad news comes fluttering in like the famous butterfly whose wings, according to chaos theory, can create a storm that uproots an entire environment. But good news can arrive too, and open up new opportunities. A change in government, reports of innovations, a new market, a drop in interest rates –all these things have a new, immediate impact.

[...]

Global jobs are working for the global market. And they need access to a large number of buyers. At the final stage of production or services before the customer, individuality is required as an attractive force. But preceding that, there are the backend systems, control chips, technologies, power trains, components, platforms and service elements.

Who will create these modules? People whose work revolves around the three dimensions of the future. They must transcend time, distance and quality so that the whole production chain can rise to the challenge of securing firm orders. The required effort will need to come from modules, spare parts, customer service, and customer-oriented development guided by market reactions. Adaptation, application, and acceptance will become the fundamental prerequisites for the future. More and more people will ask themselves, „What can I do for the global market?“ The answer to this existential question will be: more specialization, better anchoring, improved performance and vigorous defence.

---

1. Según el titular del artículo Contre la «pensée Tietmeyer», un Welfare State européen, traducido al alemán, en el periódico Die Zeit, 1 de noviembre de 1996.

## Referencias

Peter Hartz, Job Revolution (2002), *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, pp. 19, 20, 30, 130, 132.

Bordieu, Pierre (1996) Contre la «pensée Tietmeyer», un *Welfare State européen*

[http://www.liberation.fr/tribune/1996/10/25/contre-la-pensee-tietmeyer-un-welfare-state-europeen\\_185997](http://www.liberation.fr/tribune/1996/10/25/contre-la-pensee-tietmeyer-un-welfare-state-europeen_185997) (Acceso en noviembre 2015)