

# Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility,  
and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

English Edition of *Zeit-Fragen*

## “The final question will not be whether America or China has won. It will be whether humanity has won.” Kishore Mahbubani’s latest book on Chinese-American relations

by Johannes Irsiegler

*The Singaporean political scientist and diplomat Kishore Mahbubani is known for his publications in which he keeps on calling for more equality in the relations between the West and Asian cultures. As a first step, he wants to arouse interest in the other culture and aims at imparting knowledge about it – a concern for understanding among nations and in the end, for peace. Mahbubani can draw upon a wealth of individual and cultural experience, as he knows both the Western and the Asian world.*

His latest book, “Has China won? The Chinese Challenge to American Primacy” is rooted in the tradition of understanding among nations.

### A plea for cooperation in times of rising tension

The book deals with the relationship between the two great powers, the USA and China. This is of great importance to readers in all countries, as it is very significant for all of us whether these two powers will be cooperating on issues of global importance, or whether the desire for dominance and, as a consequence, the danger of war will prevail.

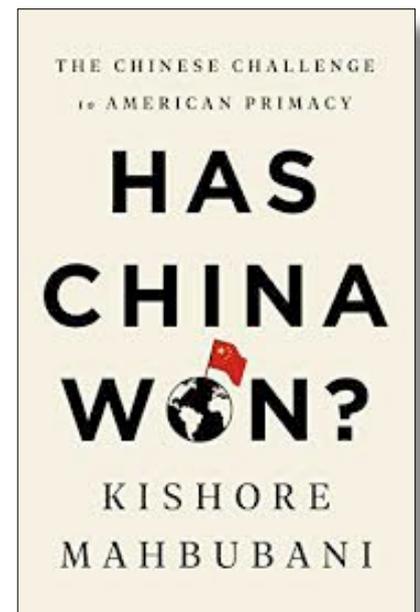
The latter is a real danger. Against the backdrop of serious domestic and foreign policy problems, the once sole world power, the United States, is adopting a very irreconcilable and confronta-

tional tone towards China, and, as Mahbubani notes, is doing so across otherwise irreconcilable party lines. In other Western countries, too, there is an increasing number of voices who believe that they must adopt a confrontational tone towards China, as much as possible, to match that of the USA.

The title of the book might be misleading. Mahbubani is not concerned with prophesying the victory of one power or another in global competition. At the end of the book, he concludes: “The final question will therefore not be whether America or China has won. It will be whether humanity has won.”<sup>1</sup> Mahbubani reminds that China and the USA together make up only just 25 % of the world’s population. The remaining six billion people on earth expect both powers “to focus on saving our planet and improving the living conditions of humanity, including of their own peoples.”<sup>2</sup> For this to succeed, the other party’s concerns must be understood realistically and without ideological blinkers, which also means recognizing one’s own misguided developments that have led into the wrong path of confrontation.

### Western ignorance of a culture thousands of years old

For a reader from a Western state, the examples of how Mahbubani describes China are very instructive. Right at the

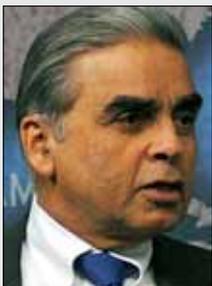


ISBN 978-1-5417-6813-0

beginning of his book, Mahbubani states that it is a fundamental error if the Chinese Communist Party CCP is perceived primarily as Communist and not as Chinese. In East Asia it is rightly recognized that the foundation of the CCP today is above all Chinese civilization and culture. The C in this context stands for Chinese civilization. The Chinese system of government reflects thousands of years of Chinese political tradition and wisdom. Mahbubani acknowledges China’s great historical achievement over the last thirty years: 1.3 billion people have been taken out of poverty. He states, that the Chinese people have enjoyed more personal freedom under the CCP than any other previous Chinese government.<sup>3</sup>

Mahbubani characterizes the educated Chinese as very open and thoughtful. “Most Chinese leaders [...] are steeped in the classics of Chinese thought. These classics in turn open their minds to a lot of ancient Chinese philosophy – theirs is a thoughtful culture. From this they understand that the greatest mistake for

continued on page 2



Kishore Mahbubani  
(Picture Wikipedia)

ji. Born and raised in Singapore as the son of Indian parents, Kishore Mahbubani feels close to all Asian cultures. His name Mahbubani is of Persian origin, he can say of himself that he has “cultural connections to different societies in Asia, where half of humanity lives, all the way from Teh-

ran to Tokyo”. His professional career began in 1971 as a diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Singapore. He worked there until 2004, during which time he was sent to Cambodia, Malaysia, Washington D.C. and New York. He served as Singapore’s Permanent Representative to the United Nations and held the position of President of the United Nations Security Council between January 2001 and May 2002. From 2004 to the end of 2017 Mahbubani, as founding member and first Dean, worked at the *National University of Singapore’s (NUS) Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy (LKYSPP)*.

“The final question will not be ...”

continued from page 1

any Chinese leader would be to be rigid, ideological, and doctrinaire. Hence, even though many Chinese leaders reaffirm their commitment to *Marx* and even *Mao*, they also know that these examples must be adapted and implemented in a flexible way.”<sup>4</sup> The Chinese leadership, Mahbubani says, wants to regenerate its own culture, but without having a missionary impulse towards the rest of the world. On the contrary: “One great paradox about our world today is that even though China has traditionally been a closed society, while America purports to be an open society, the Chinese leaders find it easier than American leaders to deal with a diverse world, as they have no expectation that other societies should become like them. They, unlike Americans, understand that other societies think and behave differently.”<sup>5</sup> He points out: “China is probably the least interventionist power of all the great powers.”<sup>6</sup>

### Reflections on democracy

One chapter of the book is dealing with the question whether China should become “democratic”, a demand repeatedly made to China by the West. However, this would first need a discussion of what democracy really is. Mahbubani puts this question into a larger, socio-historical context of China: “The Chinese people fear chaos. It is the one force that in the past brought China to its knees and brought misery to the Chinese people.”<sup>7</sup> Especially in its recent history, China has experienced many periods of chaos and instability. This is why stable political conditions have top priority. In case of doubt, the Chinese culture gives priority to social harmony. However, there is also the example of democratic development in Taiwan.

According to Mahbubani “it is actually in China’s national interest to allow the continuation of a social and political laboratory to indicate how a Chinese society functions under a different political system.”<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, “China could learn long-term lessons from Taiwan on how Chinese people cope with democracy.”<sup>9</sup> For this however, the relations must not be disturbed from outside.

Despite a growing antagonism between the two world powers, Mahbubani considers that there is still cause for cautious optimism. “Yet, even though the case for pessimism is strong, one could also make an equally strong case for optimism. If we could marshal the forces of reason to develop an understanding of the real national interests of both America and China, we would come to the conclusion that there should be no fundamental contradiction between the two powers.”<sup>10</sup>

There is no contradiction between their own interests. On the contrary, Mahbubani even speaks of five “non-contradictions”.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, “(i)f America and China were to focus on their core interests of improving the livelihood and well-being of their citizens, they would come to realize that there are no fundamental contradictions in their long-term national interests.”<sup>12</sup>

According to Mahbubani there is the chance that “the march of reason, triggered in the West by the Enlightenment, is spreading globally, leading to the emergence of pragmatic problem-solving cultures in every region and making it possible to envisage the emergence of a stable and sustainable rules-based order.”<sup>13</sup>

The ideals of Enlightenment, which embrace humanity, could thus flourish in every culture with its own specific character. This is how Mahbubani understands a thought of the Chinese President Xi Jinping: “Civilizations don’t have to clash with each other; what is needed are eyes to see the beauty in all civilizations. We

should keep our own civilizations dynamic and create conditions for other civilizations to flourish. Together we can make the garden of world civilizations colorful and vibrant.”<sup>14</sup>

For Mahbubani, the ability to understand another culture and learn from it is one of the reasons for the success of Asian countries: “One reason the West can no longer dominate the world is that the rest have learned so much from the West. They have imbibed many Western best practices in economics, politics, science and technology.”<sup>15</sup> Why then should the West not be able today to overcome the pressing problems, for example the corona crisis, in a process of mutual understanding and learning from each other?

Mahbubani’s remarks on the role of Europe, on the question of Hong Kong and Taiwan are very worth considering, but to present them in detail would go beyond the scope of this discussion. Here again he pleads for more understanding and less confrontational thinking in black and white terms.

The only “downer” is that the book has just been published in English so far. However, it is very worth reading. We wish this important political book translations into as many languages as possible, so that the idea of understanding among nations and peace will be widely spread.

<sup>1</sup> p. 282

<sup>2</sup> Mahbubani is using the term “Chinese Communist Party” and “Chinese Civilization Party” for CCP (p. 7).

<sup>3</sup> p. 172

<sup>4</sup> p. 171

<sup>5</sup> p. 254

<sup>6</sup> p. 148

<sup>7</sup> p. 15

<sup>8</sup> p. 99

<sup>9</sup> p. 99

<sup>10</sup> p. 260

<sup>11</sup> p. 260

<sup>12</sup> p. 281

<sup>13</sup> p. 274

<sup>14</sup> p. 275

<sup>15</sup> p. 11

## Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility, and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

### Subscribe to Current Concerns – The journal of an independent cooperative

The cooperative *Zeit-Fragen* is a politically and financially independent organisation. All of its members work on a voluntary and honorary basis. The journal does not accept commercial advertisements of any kind and receives no financial support from business organisations. The journal *Current Concerns* is financed exclusively by its subscribers. We warmly recommend our model of free and independent press coverage to other journals.

Annual subscription rate of  
CHF 40,-; Euro 30,-; USD 40,-; GBP 25,-  
for the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

Annual subscription rate of  
CHF 20,-; Euro 15,-; USD 20,-; GBP 12,50  
for all other countries.

Please choose one of the following ways of payment:  
- send a cheque to *Current Concerns*, P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich, or  
- send us your credit card details (only *Visa*), or  
- pay into one of the following accounts:

CH:	Postcheck-Konto (CHF):	87-644472-4	IBAN CH91 0900 0000 8764 4472 4	BIC POFICHBEXXX
CH:	Postcheck-Konto (Euro):	91-738798-6	IBAN CH83 0900 0000 9173 8798 6	BIC POFICHBEXXX
D:	Volksbank Tübingen, Kto. 67 517 005, BLZ 64190110		IBAN DE12 6419 0110 0067 5170 05	BIC GENODE31TUE
A:	Raiffeisen Landesbank, Kto. 1-05.713.599, BLZ 37000		IBAN AT55 3700 0001 0571 3599	BIC RVVGAT2B

# Nord Stream 2 and the US sanctions

by Jochen Scholz\*, retired Lieutenant Colonel of the German Armed Forces



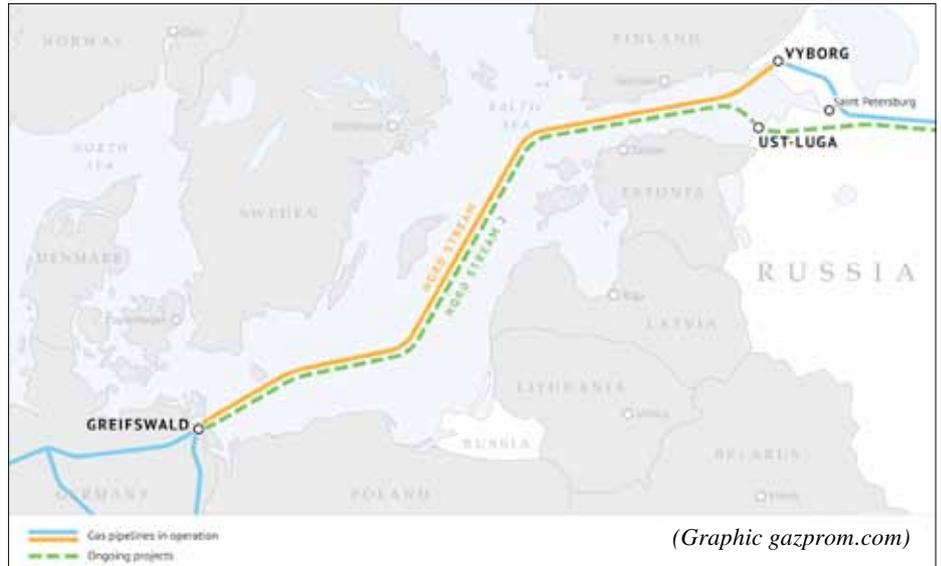
Jochen Scholz  
(Picture ma)

From the beginning of the construction works the USA made it clear that they would leave no stone unturned to prevent the second pipeline from Russia through the Baltic Sea to Germany. While in the beginning attempts to exert influence

through diplomatic channels or via the media were aimed at members who are in bondage to the US of the EU Commission, the European Parliament and those EU member states whose governments have been spreading the chimera of a Russian threat for years, the US Congress and administration have now tightened the thumbscrews considerably. However, this will only work if those affected do not set crystal-clear limits against the encroachment on their sovereignty.

What is this about? The USA is determined to impose sanctions on companies and individuals involved in the construction and subsequent operation of the pipeline on the basis of Section 232 of the “Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act” (<https://www.congress.gov/bills/115th-congress/house-bill/3364/text?q>). These sanctions are without question contrary to international law because a national law of a state is applied extraterritorially. We have seen this behaviour on the part of the USA over and over again in recent years, as in the case of Iran. Without going into detail at this point: the sanctions imposed could only be effective because of the role of the US dollar in the global financial system. Generally speaking, such action is called extortion.

The German government has publicly forbidden any interference in the business activities of Germany. However, this is not enough to dissuade the USA from



its intention to prevent the *Nord Stream 2* project. After all, a criminal who demands money from a citizen with a drawn revolver will not be turned away by friendly coaxing. What is at stake here is nothing less than the international legal order created by the Charter of the United Nations after 1945. It is increasingly being replaced by the law of the fist, a development that has already gained momentum since the end of the Soviet Union.

So, what is my advice to the federal government? Under no circumstances should it try to give back as you were given, i.e. to resort to sanctions. For then it fuelled the erosion of international law, which it is currently lamenting. The Charter of the United Nations points the way. Germany is a non-permanent member of the Security Council until the end of the year and held the chair until the end of July. It should take the initiative to apply Article 96 of the Charter:

#### “Article 96

(1) *The General Assembly or the Security Council may request the International Court of Justice to give an advisory opinion on any legal question.*

(2) *Other organs of the United Nations and specialised agencies, which may at any time be so authorised by the General Assembly, may also request advisory opinions of the Court on legal questions arising within the scope of their activities.”*

This would put the issue on the world stage and increase its visibility, whereas at present it is largely debated only in the American and European<sup>1</sup> public. This also applies to the probable case that the US would veto the Security Council.

The decisive reason for the obstruction of the USA by its power elite, acting independently of the respective presidency, is geopolitical in nature. Cooperation between Germany and Russia in the energy sector is undoubtedly a building block on the long road to a Eurasian economic area, which would also inevitably entail a new security architecture. This would have meant that the Anglo-American struggle for decades for the “world island”, whose domination, according to *Halford Mackinder*, is the prerequisite for world dominance.<sup>2</sup> Other reasons, such as the sale of the American fracking gas in liquid form to the EU, play a subordinate role and serve President Trump at best as an election campaign issue. In contrast, the pipeline project is important for Russia both in geopolitical terms and, given its economic structure, in economic terms.

In this respect, it would be welcome if Russia, as a permanent member of the Security Council, would consider applying Article 96 of the Charter. •

<sup>1</sup> This includes the Russian Federation.

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.lettre.de/beitrag/mccoy-alfred-w\\_herzland-und-weltinsel](https://www.lettre.de/beitrag/mccoy-alfred-w_herzland-und-weltinsel)

\* Jochen Scholz was a Lieutenant Colonel in the German Armed Forces. As such, he served for several years with NATO in Brussels and afterwards – during the NATO war against Yugoslavia – in the German Ministry of Defence. There he learned that the official speeches of the responsible politicians about blatant human rights violations by Serbia did not correspond with what he could learn from the reports of the experts on the spot. Because of these lies of the politicians he left the SPD in 1999.

# Portland is now ground zero in America's culture war

by Bob Barr\*, USA



Bob Barr  
(Picture ma)

*For years there has been developing a deep clash in our country between generations, political parties and personalities. This many-faceted conflict broke to the surface with the election of Donald Trump four years*

*ago, and has remained part of virtually every major public policy issue since Trump's first day in office. It now has erupted into full violence.*

Perhaps nowhere in the country is the culture clash more starkly displayed than in Portland, Oregon; not in Minneapolis, not in New York City and not even in Washington, DC. Portland has become ground zero where the battle for the very heart of America's culture is being played out.

Portland has long been known as a city of high-brow culture and far-left politics. For decades, it was a magnet for liberals of all stripes and ages; but in the past few years it has attracted a far more sinister and dangerous element – Antifa. Portland's soft, left-wing political establishment, led since January 2017 by pacifist Mayor *Ted Wheeler*, provides a perfect breeding ground for violent protesters.

Since joining forces in late May, Antifa and Black Lives Matter have engaged in nightly demonstrations, vandalism, and arson, meeting little resistance from the city. In recent days, however, Wheeler's strategy of "soft policing" (backed by Oregon's equally liberal Governor *Kate Brown*) has run into resistance.

President *Trump* has thrown down the gauntlet in Portland, declaring that while the state's and the city's political leaders may not care if vandals desecrate federal buildings and facilities and endanger federal employees in Portland, he does. Reflecting an executive order he signed in

late June directing federal law enforcement to proactively protect federal buildings, structures and personnel against vandals and other violent activists, and to actually prosecute those who perpetrate such acts, Trump recently ordered federal law enforcement personnel into Portland to do just that.

Judging by the howls emanating from Portland City Hall and from the state capitol in Eugene, one might conclude that the President had sent Patton's Third Army into the city. Both Wheeler and Brown cried that Trump had sent masses of "secret police" into Portland to indiscriminately grab peaceful protestors off the streets and whisk them off to secret locations (perhaps to be waterboarded).

In fact, there has been nothing secret about the Administration's actions; far from it. The President and the acting Secretary of Homeland Security *Chad Wolf* have made clear in numerous public pronouncements their commitment to protect federal facilities and personnel in Portland and other cities. Moreover, ubiquitous TV cameras and cell phone recordings would make clandestine police actions next to impossible at any rate.

Wheeler continues to view the goings on in the city he nominally leads through the same rose-tinted glasses that throughout his tenure has allowed Antifa thugs to physically attack conservative journalists, stop traffic on major highways, and engage in acts of arson and vandalism largely at will. Not surprisingly, Trump does not view violent protests with the same degree of compassion as does the mayor, particularly when directed at federal properties and personnel.

Wheeler's timidity in dealing with violent protestors truly has blinded him to reality. For example, even as Antifa and Black Lives Matters protestors last weekend were attacking Portland Police buildings as well as the federal courthouse in the city, Wheeler was on TV complaining that it was only the presence of federal law enforcement that caused any problem.

Despite hyped-up claims by Mayor Wheeler, Governor *Brown*, Sen. *Ron Wyden* (D-OR), Speaker *Nancy Pelosi*, and now House Judiciary Chair *Jerry Nadler* (D-NY), that federal law enforcement

in Portland have been engaging in wantonly unconstitutional actions protecting federal facilities and personnel from violence, President Trump is unlikely to back down; nor should he.

As President, Mr. Trump has an absolute responsibility to protect federal facilities and personnel whenever and wherever they are threatened, whether at home or abroad. That this no longer is considered by the Democrat Party as a legitimate underpinning of civil society, illustrates the depth of the chasm into which we are sliding.

Source: The Daily Caller from 20 July 2020

\* \* \*

*ef. The incidents in Portland, as described in Bob Barr's article, are not an isolated case: on 6 August, the US correspondent of the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" reported that the months of protests by the "Black Lives Matter" movement repeatedly demanded that resources be withdrawn from the fundamentally racist and therefore unreformable police force. The consequence of this wave of protests was that the police forces held back in cases of doubt, possibly also because they were afraid of the accusation of "racial profiling". As the "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" writes, the US Secretary of Justice William Barr had made the following statement in Congress: "When a community turns on and pillories its own police, officers naturally become more risk averse and crime rates soar. Unfortunately, we are seeing that now in many of our major cities." According to the Wall Street Journal, the number of homicides has risen by double digits since the beginning of the year in 36 of the 50 largest cities in the US. Portland is an example of other American cities where, according to Bob Barr, the "battle for the very heart of America's culture" is being fought. Against this backdrop, the government's approach of instructing federal law enforcement officials in Portland to proactively protect and prosecute federal buildings, structures, and personnel becomes at least understandable. Even though many of the mainstream media in our latitudes refuse to acknowledge this.* •

\* Bob Barr (twitter.com/bobbarr) represented U.S. state Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1995 to 2003. He won the Libertarian Party's presidential nomination in 2008 and currently serves as president and CEO of the Law Enforcement Education Foundation.

# Germany is going to become more and more divided

## Afterthoughts about the Berlin-demonstrations and manifestations against the state's corona policies

by Karl-Jürgen Müller

On 1 August a lot of people participated in a demonstration against the government's policies to fight the Corona-pandemic. After the demonstrations a manifestation was scheduled on the "Strasse des 17. Juni" situated between the Triumphal Column and the Brandenburg Gate. The manifestation's slogan was "End of the Pandemic – Beginning of Freedom." The demonstration and its manifestations were organised by a Stuttgart group named "Mavrick 711"<sup>1</sup> – 0711 being Stuttgart's dialling code.

As early as shortly after the demonstration began, the police tried to break up the manifestation. This was reported in a police press release dated 2 August 2020: "The definite majority of the demonstrators disobeyed the hygiene concept and the requirement to wear masks (mouth and nose-protection) so that the police's intervention became necessary. After continuously disregarding police requests and announcements and since the gathering's leaders refused to call off the manifestation, the assembly was finally broken up by the police."<sup>2</sup>

The information about the number of people attending the manifestation vary very much: The Berlin police press release of 2 August<sup>3</sup> spoke of 20,000 – the event organisers, sympathising groups and alternative media – among them a six-hour livestream<sup>4</sup> – spoke of 1.3 million attendants. When scrutinising the pictures of the demonstration it becomes obvious that 20,000 was a grave understatement as the number of 1.3 million was a grave overstatement. When you estimate the space from the Triumphal Column up to the Brandenburg Gate, taking into account the width of the street and the density of the assembly you may estimate, however, a number of more than one hundred thousand people.

### Nearly all reporting lacked objectivity

Factual media contributions about the manifestation and the participants are rare so far. The German mainstream-media sound unanimous, they all report these very low attendance numbers published by the police and judge the demonstration and its participants altogether negatively. They all emphasise that there were people attending from the right-wing political spectrum, whereas the alternative media which supported the event regarded it as a history-charged event. So in a widely-spread alternative medium: "Today is a

historical event reaching beyond our country's borders. The people arise, the numbers are magnificent. No-one thought this possible. It is the deepest fall of the Merkel system – and of the mendacious press. [...] Today's 500,000 plus have been glorious. No regime can stand this for long. Now we must hang on!"

Those commentaries show that there is more to it than protest against the state's measures to contain the Corona Pandemic. Obviously interested circles are searching for instruments to pursue far-reaching political goals and use all kinds of "dissatisfied" individuals and groups. Personages with a very different "Weltanschauung" entered the stage, among them *Oliver Janich*, *Thorsten Schulte* or *Clemens Kuby*. – one alternative medium discovered the long-awaited 'Querfront' (counter front) in them.

### There was talk of peace, Freedom and Love ...

Speakers in Berlin talked of peace, freedom and love, one could hear love-songs and see hands formed as hearts. There was a great poster near the stage showing *Ghandi*. The organisers spoke moderately with the police. Obviously any violence was to be avoided after the police's early break-up announcement and the police was not attacked by the participants. It all came across rather like a public festival – and an extensive report even compared the event to the "Love Parade".<sup>5</sup> There were no substantial contributions to be heard dealing with the actual political, economic or social problems and how to solve them.

### ... while legal regulations were deliberately disregarded

Policemen, even single ones were picked out and filmed from closest distance and exhibited where possible and attacked verbally. A rapper performing at the beginning presented himself as radical social critic. Event organisers and participants were determined to break the rules. They ignored the legal protection measures aiming at the pandemic's containment – more than one hundred thousand marchers did indeed not obey the rule of social distancing and did not wear masks. Quite the contrary, the slogan was to unmask "those in power" and these irresponsible dealings with the factual danger for all participants and many more people was converted into an act of "political resistance".

### Anti-state battle slogans

The police's repeated request to break up the manifestation were answered by loud callings like "We will stay" or "resistance". There was talk like "We are here, we are noisy, because you are stealing our liberty". The organisers demanded the participants to sit down on the floor in order to prevent an evacuation by the police. With the open appeal to break the law the organisers did not assume their responsibility. Are they aware whom they are serving this way? And what shall one make of what another widely read alternative medium wrote on 3 August: "Saturday's assembly was the perhaps biggest government critical demonstration since 4 November 1989.<sup>6</sup> The government's decision to break it up and the following impotence of the stately authorities to do so point the way to politically new ground." What sort of politically new ground might the author of this sentence have in mind?

### Why have the media lost all objectivity?

Another question is why the main stream media did not report objectively and why politicians reacted hardly adequately. The president of the Social Democrats *Saskia Esken* called the demonstrators once again "COVID Idiots". This is not the way to do justice to the more than one hundred thousand demonstrators. The recordings show many very different people, most of the speakers did not at all seem radical – but all those who spoke were "dissatisfied". The reasons may be manifold, "corona" is a catalyst. What are the perhaps serious commitments? This did not become clear in Berlin, either. It was too much of an "event". Risking one's own health and that of others was not very responsible – and may later charge a bitter price and unfortunately one has to reckon with more such unreasonable acts. The counter-demonstration taking place simultaneously did not offer more. So it was apparent that the division of the German society is going to proceed and an honest dialogue will become ever more difficult. It is well-known that such a dialogue requires the acceptance of the opponent – in all directions.

### Questionable historical comparisons

The manifestation's participants may have felt like 1989 in the former (East) German Democratic Republic (GDR) – chanting "We are the people" and stressing the par-

# Violence against the police in Stuttgart, Frankfurt and other places

## Thoughts on underlying and related issues

by Ewald Wetekamp, Stockach am Bodensee

News on the riots and violent assaults in Stuttgart spread very quickly. Video clips about this night were uploaded on the net. Eyewitnesses went public. They reported to be completely puzzled because they had never seen anything like this before. Their state of bewilderment seemed genuine. The videos were commented on by the state media but never dominated the news flow. Exculpatory comments were aired instead, claiming that these criminal acts – damage to property and bodily harm, fulfilling the criteria of violation of the public peace – were due to the perpetrators being “frustrated by the corona lockdown”. Another talking point was the so-called “party scene” who for unknown reasons had actively indulged in horrendous violence.

How come we are expected to even listen to such systematic downplay? Where is the united public outcry against violence? Instead, some professor of criminology offers apologies as if those thugs were just nice lads we should have sympathy for, because they had become criminals due to the “societal circumstances” yet again.

### Stuttgart is no singularity

Those who fool themselves into believing that Stuttgart was a singular phenomenon should be reminded that the same things have happened year in, year out in Berlin, Hamburg, Cologne and other places in Germany. One of the main organizers of the *Rote Flora* riots during the G20 sum-

mit in Hamburg took pride in announcing that “next time” Blankenese, a wealthy Hamburg suburb would be targeted rather than the city center. Nobody bothered to prosecute this felony of an invocation to commit a crime – and the invocation is in itself a felony for sure. The invocation was even broadcasted in the news, at prime time. No branch of the judiciary raised an eyebrow. They should have! Neither did anybody get active when notorious thugs from all over Europe had made their way to Hamburg. This was well documented.

Encouraged by the exculpatory statements in the mainstream media and the overall lack of consequences more riots were staged in Stuttgart at the third weekend after the first incident. Only thanks to an overwhelming police presence no looting occurred this time. The bizarre statement of a police spokesperson who called it “just a normal Saturday night in Stuttgart” is food for thought on the question, to what degree one severely injured and eleven arrests should be normal. This second round of riots went almost unnoticed beyond the regional press. Unlike the jobs police officers had been doing during the riots and violent assaults. Since many of the perpetrators refused to reveal their identities police had started to investigate their family backgrounds. This prompted rage about alleged “genealogy research”. It goes without saying what the motivation behind these outcries was.

Social democrats, Greens and even Free democrats denounced this kind of investigation as “in no way acceptable”, “ir-

ritating” and “dangerous” and that people were “profoundly distressed” by it. Irritating and distressing indeed are these statements of politicians since they pave the way for more riots and undermine the work of the police. Sure enough, in the night from 18 to 19 July another riot broke out on opera square in Frankfurt with five police officers injured and 39 arrests. Police had come to the rescue of a man who was lying on the ground in a brawl. All the thugs immediately joined forces and turned against the officers. They hurled bottles at them. Each hit was celebrated.

### No-go areas

Who doesn't know such areas in German cities and even small towns? Ever since the books “Deutschland im Blaulicht” (Germany – a police report) and “Das Ende der Geduld” (The end of patience) we all got some insight into these phenomena. Why is this situation neither widely discussed nor actively prevented? Recent example is a query to the regional government of North-Rhine-Westphalia (NRW). The initiators posed the question where in NRW the hotspots of criminality or so-called *no-go areas* were located, which police enter as full units only, if at all. It took the government three years to answer this question. And they had to have their arms twisted to answer it at all. Only after the initiators had appealed to the constitutional court of NRW who got active, the ministry of the interior of NRW pro-

continued on page 7

### “Germany is going to become ...”

continued from page 5

allel to the rebellion of 17 June 1953 by pointing to the street name. However, to what degree is the comparison of today's Federal Republic to the former GDR – and above all to the situation of the citizens and the factual dangers by their rebellion against a dictatorship realistic? Unfortunately it happens often in political dispute to refer to historical comparisons. However, are they any meaningful? Do they provide any aid in solving real problems?

To break fundamental principles of the rule of law – as done with the deliberate offence of the valid hygiene concept and the request to wear a mouth-and nose-protection – as well as the disregarding of the state's monopoly on the use of force, or in other words: the disregard of the police's

orders, are a dangerous slippery slope. This way might prepare the ground for aggressive acts – as was the case in Stuttgart und Frankfurt.

### Politics as well must assume responsibility

Politics as well have to assume responsibility. It is the politics' task to win over the citizens for their principles of the constitutional state and democratic procedures – not by words but by many definite deeds. All this is in a sorry state as well. More of direct democracy could be an alternative. The sovereignty of the people could be reinforced that way and the search for appropriate solutions could be shared by a broader basis. This as well could be a means to avoid that the rifts widen and society becomes even more divided. •

<sup>1</sup> <https://querdenken-711.de>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.berlin.de/polizei/polizeimeldungen/pressemitteilung.968142.php> from 2 August 2020

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-11-Bec4rs> from 1 August 2020

<sup>5</sup> <https://de.sputniknews.com/kommentare/20200802327611934-anti-corona-demo-loveparade-berlin/> from 2 August 2020

<sup>6</sup> The demonstration on Alexanderplatz in Berlin was the greatest demonstration in the history of the GDR. The demonstration took place on 4 November 1989 in East-Berlin and it was the first officially allowed demonstration in the GDR, that was not organised by the government. The demonstration and the final manifestation on the ‘Alexanderplatz’ were organised by members of the East-Berlin Theatre and was directed against the violence of the state and pleaded for constitutional rights, freedom of the press, freedom of opinion and assembly. The Alexanderplatz demonstration was attended by one million people. However, these numbers are controversial. The demonstration is regarded as the milestone event to the peaceful revolution in the GDR.

**"Violence against the police ..."**

continued from page 6

vided the information. According to this answer, Cologne was classified as the main hotspot of violent crime, although their mayor keeps claiming the city was safer than ever before. Several neighbourhoods are avoided by the police unless as whole units in full combat gear. Even firefighters are routinely attacked in these places. And this is not only condoned, but word about the real situation is prevented from getting out, a situation which is euphemized and put up with.

Another current example of the erosion of state responsibility was provided by the minister of the interior himself who had sued a commentator of the left-wing journal "taz" but immediately withdrew the lawsuit. She had referred to police officers as "human waste". Why on earth would the minister withdraw the charge? Ever since the "Black Lives Matter"-campaign has been staged word-wide police officers report they find it increasingly difficult to arrest perpetrators since accusations of racism are voiced immediately. Should that not work, the accusation of sexism serves as plan B.

**What are "unregulated areas"?**

This is supposedly how "unregulated areas" come into being. The term has been used so often now that one might be

inclined to think there was in fact such a thing. Scrutinizing it further though, we find a different principle taking hold in these so-called "unregulated areas", dedicated to different "values", a principle which is claimed to be either more just or more practicable. Just look at the internet. It had been claimed to withstand regulation for a long time. Supposedly it was impossible to prevent criminal activities in the internet. Therefore that man who had bought a distillation apparatus online for his wife was quite surprised when customs officers knocked at his door – he and his wife wanted to distill essences from herbs and leaves but a legal license is needed in Germany for the distillation of alcohol. Suddenly the internet was not only very much regulated but swift action was taken, too. What about all those child pornography rings and hardcore pornography pictures even small children are exposed to all the time? Those are too hard to regulate?

**Those so-called "unregulated areas" are the real no-go's!**

Ever since the "network enforcement act" was issued by the German government, all difficulties to comb through the internet for illegal content miraculously disappeared – "hate speech" and "fake news" are deleted immediately. *Youtube* has deleted thousands of accounts with millions of video clips already, *twitter* has joined

in. As it turns out the "Lords of the nets" had been capable to do this all the time, now they go ahead and pull it off. These cancel activities are beyond "legally questionable" because no court has ever defined these contents which are so bad that they no longer are protected by the constitutional right to free speech. "Hate speech" and "fake news" have suddenly become state enemy number one. Everything else just pales in comparison.

The network enforcement act and the position of the big tech monopolists have developed an unheard-of censorship machine. The published opinion is getting enforced as a new cultural hegemony, by means of network enforcement act and the arbitrary censorship function of the big tech monopolists, and declared to be the touchstone of all things. In the not so distant past we had an Italian strategists who developed the theory of cultural hegemony into a political concept which was greeted with enthusiasm by his neo-marxist followers. Today we have-to face the situation that topics like gender, family, tradition, nation, the state, society, the economy, values, virtues and also historiography are dominated by a "collective emperor" who rules in this cultural hegemony.

**The state's monopoly on violence**

Since there is no equivalent of the second amendment in most European constitutions, the state fulfils the obligation and mandatory duty here to guarantee the interior and exterior security of the citizens. Mandatory because only the representatives of the state are permitted to carry guns and use them to punish criminal acts. The judiciary framework is designed to fit to this state of affairs. Using guns to protect oneself is verboten. This is supposed to be delegated to the state. The civil society still understands it as their legal right that the state provides an environment for them to thrive and develop.

**What does it mean that ANTIFA is getting sponsored by the state?**

This understanding of state duties is still widespread and regarded as very important especially in the Federal Republic of Germany. It only makes sense as long as police is there to protect the citizens according to the rule of law in the democratically legitimised state. Forces who aim to de-legitimise the police in general and portray them as brutal, brainless mercenaries "for the interests of the ruling class" do this because they follow political-ideological schemes and motivations which are incompatible with the European concept of democracy. Modern mili-

**Excerpts from the Berlin state Anti-Discrimination Law LADG**

*State Anti-Discrimination Law of the Federal State of Berlin, passed in the Senate on 11 June 2020, announced on 20 June 2020 in the Berlin Gazette of Laws and Ordinances.*

**§ 2 Prohibition of discrimination**

In the context of public activities no person may be discriminated on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, racist and anti-Semitic attribution of religion and ideologie, disability, chronic illness, age, language, sexual and gender identity as well as social status.

**§ 3 Scope**

1 This law applies to the Berlin administration, to public bodies, institutions and foundations directly under state control, to the Berlin Court of Auditors and to the Berlin Commissioner for Data Protection and Freedom of Information, as well as to the courts and the authorities of the Berlin Public Prosecutor's Office, the Constitutional Court and the Berlin House of Representatives [...].

**§ 4 Forms of discrimination**

1 Direct discrimination shall be taken to occur when one person [...] is treated less favourably than another

person is treated, has been treated or would be treated in a comparable situation and when the difference in treatment [...] is not justified. [...] Omission to take measures and to act in a way which would put an end to discrimination is tantamount to doing so, [...].

**§ 7 Presumption provision**

If facts are established which make the existence of a violation of § 2 or § 6 predominantly probable, it is the responsibility of the public body to refute the violation.

**§ 8 Liability for damages; legal action**

1 In the event of a violation [...], the public body in whose area of responsibility the discrimination has taken place shall be obliged to compensate the discriminated person for the resulting damage [...].

2 The victim of discrimination may demand appropriate monetary compensation for damage other than financial loss.

**§ 9 regulates the "The Anti-Discrimination Law Class Action".**

Translation: Current Concerns

**"Violence against the police ..."**

continued from page 7

tia-like organisations like ANTIFA follow their own agenda.

Still there are debates in the parliament that ANTIFA should be granted a fixed budget of taxpayer's money because they shouldn't be bothered to write new grant applications every year. These payments are already made in substantial amounts by some regional governments who argue that ANTIFA was essential to democracy. At that point the members of those regional parliaments need to answer the question what their opinion about the state's monopoly on violence is. The question: who is it who receives this state sponsoring? can be asked, too.

While this support of ANTIFA by state institutions clearly undermines the work of the police already, the regional Anti-Discrimination Law (LADG) passed by the parliament of Berlin on 11 June 2020 moves it to the next level. With this law the Social democrat/ Green/ Leftist Senate of Berlin targets not only the work of the police but the whole public service. All its employees are forced into defense mode by a highly debatable definition of anti-discrimination, resulting in a situation that one only needs to utter the accusation to be discriminated against either ethnically, religiously or gender-related, in order to drag any public servant to court. All the claimant is required to do according to this new law is to make it plausible that discrimination might have happened – enough to open legal proceedings in which the officer must prove his or her innocence (see excerpts of the LADG below). All public servants have to deal with this principle of reversed burden of proof now. This is especially true of the schools where it will be all too easy to dismiss a lower mark or failed test as an act of discrimination by the teacher.

Even worse, the new law has established the possibility of "antidiscriminatory class actions" to obtain reimbursements for the claimant. If no material damage to the claimant can be proven, a "psychological damage" is billed. That way the officers get caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. If they do get active they are threatened by class action suits but they are, too, if they don't. See paragraph "§ 4 (1): Refraining from measures to end

discriminatory behaviour is equivalent to an act ..."

**Back then the Frankfurt school – and today?**

Several decades ago the Frankfurt school and their representatives became very influential thanks to support from both the state and civil institutions. A supposed aim of German education to produce authoritarian characters was diagnosed as the primordial evil by their followers who had found out in their analyses that this had led to national socialism. In their view the state pursued the same goal at the societal level and in the families the bad actor had also been debunked by them: the father. From this theoretical foundation they proceeded to radically cure the disease by re-education. The strategic concept was that the young generation of the late 1960s would be the agents of this process in the families, the institutions of the state and as "activists" in the streets. The pictures of youths protesting against their fathers at home and against representatives of the state in the streets have only been too familiar ever since. The level of destructiveness, with self-destructive aspects, can be seen in slogans such as "Destroy what destroys you" or "Smash the cops to bits". There is a common theme running from there via Hamburg and Stuttgart to Berlin (LADG). Many of those who took to the streets back then certainly had genuinely well-meaning intentions. There were plenty of good reasons for protest. But in the crucial question of violence they failed badly, convinced as they were that there could be justification not only for violence but also vigilantism or even murder. Violence was aimed against things at first and later against human beings. An unexcusable transgression.

There is certainly a need to constantly develop the rules of living together in a community, a reform process which should be backed by democratic majorities. There may have been examples in the education system after the war where a black pedagogy was implemented but the question arises why a democratic society such as West Germany should have been unable to propose and discuss a new ideal more adequate to the nature and essence of man and, most importantly, of the pu-

pils. That way the foundations for a lively citizenry could have been laid aiming to promote the common good. However, what we saw was that in many instances, at all levels of society, the child was poured out with the bath. The programme seems to be to rid human organisations of their state elements. In any case, a different kind of state is aimed for. What are we up for then?

**Not only in major German cities**

Stuttgart is no singularity. Such things don't just happen co-incidentally. Police reports that violent thugs in masks and combat gear had coordinated themselves via mobile phones. Equipment, clubs and stones had been piled up in advance and stored in shopping carts. Don't fool yourself into believing this was spontaneous. Question remains: who benefits? And a follow-up question: who has the means and financial resources to stage such a mayhem in several states simultaneously? If we look across the Atlantic we see civil war looming there as well. The judiciary in many states is actively hindered to perform their basic tasks. Should that be replaced by "might makes right"?

**What is to be done**

It is quite clear that there is no way such an development would be backed by a democratic majority. Police is still highly respected in the population. Now is the point in time when we as responsible citizens should voice our support, since the jobs police officers are doing, as well as firefighters and paramedics, are in our own interest. This can be done in various ways. Let's write letters to the editor about Stuttgart, Frankfurt and most importantly about the anti-discrimination law of the Berlin regional government and the network enforcement act. Let's start the discussion about our rights as citizens and the duties of the state. Let's use every chance to pay our respect and thanks to the police officers. Everybody can do this in his or her own way. The officers will appreciate that a majority of citizens values their work. This is what needs to be done – committed statements, honest field research about what really happened in the incidents and also a profound discussion about the essence of the state and the rule of law!

# Against public-law concealment of war crimes

by Eva-Maria Föllmer-Müller

On 10 July 2020, a lawsuit against a *Central German Broadcasting Corporation's* (MDR) decision to issue a notice of objection was heard at the Administrative Court in the German city of Leipzig. This lawsuit makes one sit up and take notice, since a physician had filed a complaint against MDR because the broadcaster had refused to comply with the plaintiff's objection to the fees. The case history: for several years, the physician had refused to pay the monthly fees of 17.50 euros for public broadcasting (ARD, ZDF, Deutschlandradio, etc.), which have been imposed on every household since 2013. For this refusal he had declared reasons of conscience, namely:

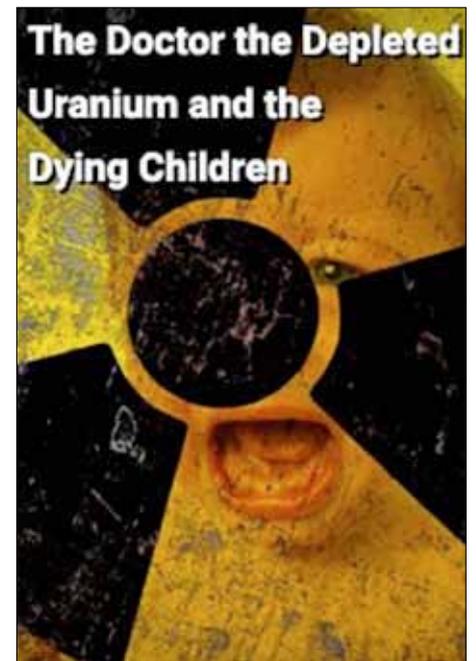
The filmmaker and Grimme Prize winner *Frieder Wagner* had produced a documentary on the use of uranium ammunition (DU) for WDR in 2004 ("Der Arzt und die verstrahlten Kinder von Basra – The Doctor, the Depleted Uranium and the Dying Children"). In 2004, after having once broadcast this documentary about the harmful effects of depleted uranium (DU) in war zones – without the usual advance notice and therefore with a lower viewing rate – the WDR had not given Frieder Wagner any more commissions. Since then Wagner has not received any more commissions from any public broadcaster. Neither has any of the public broadcasters reported in a balanced way on the devastating consequences and increasing cancer rates caused by the tons of DU ammunition dropped or fired in all the wars since 1991 (second Iraq war) in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Kosovo, Serbia, Somalia, Libya. The broadcasters did not report on this despite the fact that in the meantime relatives of deceased NATO soldiers have gained recognition with their complaints against the state in Italy, in Ser-

## German Basic Law, Article 5

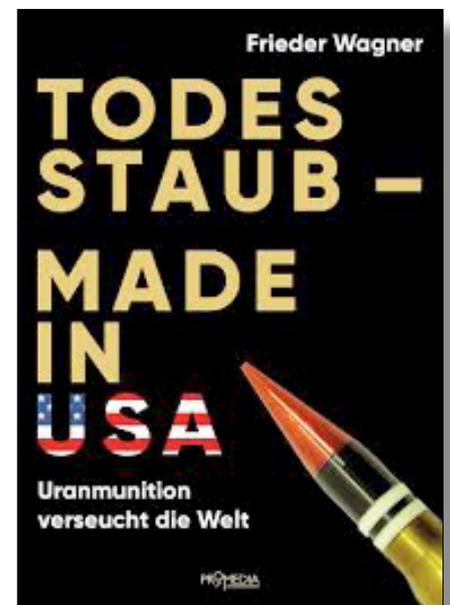
(1) Every person shall have the right freely to express and disseminate his opinions in speech, writing and pictures, and to inform himself without hindrance from generally accessible sources. Freedom of the press and freedom of reporting by means of broadcasts and films shall be guaranteed. There shall be no censorship.

bia, and most recently in France (*Current Concerns* No. 13 of 23 June 2020); despite the fact that scientific research has repeatedly produced evidence for more than 20 years; despite the fact that in the meantime, Serbian lawyer *Srdan Aleksic* from the Serbian town of Nis, together with an international team, is preparing a class action lawsuit against the Nato states (or perhaps due to that very fact)? The broadcasters have been silent on the topic, although numerous organisations and individuals have repeatedly been calling for a ban on the deadly DU munitions ... and the cancer rates in the affected countries are still rising – wherever war-torn countries have the opportunity to even detect this fact at all. There are numerous publications, documentations and articles on this topic.

Back to our starting point: The Leipzig physician concerned has been working as a specialist in internal medicine with a focus on nephrology in hospitals in Germany, England and the USA for over 20 years. He mainly treats patients with acute or chronic kidney failure. Therefore he must consider those activities a particular threat which he suspects of promoting and/or condoning acute or chronic kidney failure. For him this includes the use of uranium ammunition. Twenty years ago, the physician himself had accompanied an English officer suffering from acute kidney failure after his wartime deployment in Iraq. He said that as a physician committed also to the prevention of diseases, he could not reconcile it with his conscience if the public were not informed about the devastating consequences of the lethal DU weapons by public broadcasters, whose mission it is to provide comprehensive information: "ARD and ZDF have a special mission: They inform the population so comprehensively and in such a diverse way that everyone can form their own opinion, for example on political issues. That is important for democracy. To achieve this, ARD and ZDF must be independent of financial backers and advertising revenues that might be able to influence them. That is why everyone in Germany is jointly responsible for meet-



Link to english version of "The Doctor, the Depleted Uranium and the Dying Children": [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLr2L6TB8fh8GFCvUaQuKFeYLkIITozn3K&feature=mh\\_lolz](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLr2L6TB8fh8GFCvUaQuKFeYLkIITozn3K&feature=mh_lolz)



ISBN 978-3-85371-452-2

## Who are the "public service" broadcasters?

The ARD broadcasting family:

Bayerischer Rundfunk (BR)  
Hessischer Rundfunk (hr)  
Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk (mdr)  
Norddeutscher Rundfunk (NDR)  
Radio Bremen  
Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg (rbb)  
Saarländischer Rundfunk (SR)  
Südwestrundfunk (SWR)  
Westdeutscher Rundfunk (WDR)

And also:

Deutsche Welle DW  
Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen ZDF  
Phoenix  
Deutschlandradio

ing the expenses of 'public law' broadcasting." (<https://www.br.de/sogehmedi-en/ard-und-zdf/nutzen-heute/index.html>)

The doctor had offered a settlement – that he would pay his broadcasting contribution in cash to Frieder Wagner for his work as a freelance employee of the ARD. This would be a compensation, since Frieder Wagner had never again succeeded in getting any kind of contract from public broadcasting after his documentary on uranium ammunition.

# Opinion takes the place of balanced reporting

by Prof. Dr. Eberhard Hamer, Hannover



Eberhard Hamer  
(Picture ma)

Acceptance of German media is falling dramatically.

Annually Subscribers to German newspapers are quitting in numbers of five to six figures; and broadcasters have felt massive resistance to their fee increases for the first time.

In the social media, the print media are increasingly being referred to as “mendacious press”, and television stations are accused of increasingly one-sided government propaganda.

The *Mittelstandsinstitut Hannover* has conducted a survey of its *Mittelstand* (small and medium-sized businesses plus middle class wage earners) contact addresses and to its question “Which media do you trust most?” it received the following answers: internet media 52 %, print media 48 % and state radio media 36 %.

When asked “Why?”, entrepreneurs cited above all the overly optimistic media reports in contrast to the actual economic situation, while the employed middle class mainly mentioned the left-green one-sidedness of programmes. On balance: all media now present more opinion than news, the public service media even manipulate or go as far as educating opinion.

The following examples of such manipulation of opinion were mentioned among others:

- Despite the biggest crash in history, the business programmes have constantly

broadcast positive news and articles and are now bringing upswing news – notabene upswing from a previously denied economic slump.

- Only corporate news plays a role in the economic reports. The catastrophic situation of the 80% small businesses in our economy does not appear in the media.
- The German citizens’ oversized debt through hundreds of billions in gifts to other European states and corporations is hailed by the media as “European solidarity”, instead of mentioning the debt burden of 620 Euros for each citizen and taxpayer and the consequences of poverty.
- The continuing “immigration into the German social system” does not take place in the media, it is concealed. When individual celebrities mention it, they get to be defamed as “xenophobic” and “right-wing extremist”.
- In view of the deteriorating US relations, the middle class considers trade with Russia indispensable – the media, on the other hand, fight for the maintenance of sanctions and spread only negative reports about Russia and *Vladimir Putin*.
- The more dramatically the rate of short-time work and unemployment in Germany rises, the less this is covered in the media.

Investigators of the *Mittelstandsinstitut* also had the impression that the media are now more concerned with manipulating opinion than with presenting information. They also point out that the media are becoming increasingly de-

pendent on the state: Newspapers are constantly losing subscribers and advertisements. Several months ago, the German government therefore included a special programme of 40 million “state aid” for obedient media in the current budget, in addition to the 104 million usual media financing. Public television is now no longer neutral information, but state-financed state propaganda, financed by compulsory fees, which in reality are a propaganda tax (8 billion).

“He who pays the piper, calls the tune.” This is the only explanation for the fact that the largest opposition party is practically locked out of all government-financed media; it no longer occurs. This has nothing to do with democracy. The same government politicians who consider state manipulation of the media reprehensible when practised by Mr *Orban*, find this practice useful in Germany.

According to democratic theory, media should not be state-funded and therefore state-owned, but free. However, this means that first of all the corruption of state financing must be ended. The propaganda tax GEZ<sup>1</sup> is not only anti-competitive vis-à-vis the private broadcasters, but also damaging to democracy, precisely because it fights against opposition or locks it out completely. The propaganda tax must be ended, as must the special payments in the budget for the obedience of the media. •

<sup>1</sup> GEZ stands for “Gebühreneinzugszentrale”, the Fee Collection Center of the Public Broadcasting Companies in the Federal Republic of Germany.

## “Against public-law concealment ...”

continued from page 9

In his plea at the hearing, the physician stated that, as shown by its unbalanced reporting on the subject and the fact that *Frieder Wagner* was not awarded any further contracts, the public broadcasting service had to that day upheld an ideological commitment, the support of which, in form of a broadcasting contribution, the physician could not reconcile with his personal conscience. Not only was the principle of equal treatment within the European Union being violated, but the radio contribution was also purpose-limited by

being used to spread an unbalanced idea about uranium ammunition. The alleged absence of any such purpose-limitation of radio programmes is the legal standard-argument against the refusal to pay the radio contribution on grounds of conscience, but earmarking can also arise from deliberate concealment of information!

The Administrative Court referred the case to the next instance.

It is currently the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of *Hiroshima* and *Nagasaki*. If it is – even after 75 years – not possible to report comprehensively on the devastating consequences of the use of nuclear weapons – and the use of uranium

weapons is one of these – there is still a need for correction. •

## General programming principles

“Programming principles are laid down in the respective broadcasting laws of the *Länder*. In addition to the balance of reporting, they usually stipulate that human dignity must be respected and protected in broadcasts. Furthermore, the programmes should be committed to the truth.”

Source: <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Programmauftrag>

# Self-sufficiency with salt the Swiss way

## Who is annoyed by the cantons' salt monopoly?

by Dr. iur. Marianne Wüthrich

The availability of salt is so self-evident for us that it is easy to forget: Salt is one of the vital goods. This is explained in short form, for example, in the "Welt": "You can taste the salt content of 0.9 percent, namely in your tears. The salt content in the body is about 200 grams. Without salt, the cells would not be viable, the organs would not function and the water balance would be out of balance."<sup>1</sup> Self-sufficiency in vital goods, which was recently discussed here,<sup>2</sup> must also be guaranteed with regard to salt. For this reason, the Swiss Confederation classifies the Swiss Saltworks "as an enterprise relevant to the system and supply".<sup>3</sup>

Salt is one of the few raw materials that are available in sufficient quantities in Switzerland. But salt is not simply available to us either. In times of pandemics, it is also necessary to ensure and strengthen self-sufficiency here too. Because, as can be read in the daily press, some deposits will run out in the next few years and new ones will have to be developed. The cantons have always been responsible for this. They have the sovereign right to extract salt, the so-called "Salzregal", which also enables strong protective measures to be taken with regard to imports. Instead of standing behind full self-sufficiency, as is necessary today, a number of globalisation turbos are suddenly emerging to use a temporary bottleneck to crack the sovereign right "Salzregal".

How the cantons exercise the Swiss-style „Salzregal“ and how – so far, however, in vain – attempts have been made to tinker with it, will be the subject of discussion here.

For more than 450 years, the Swiss Saltworks have been producing the salt that the entire Swiss population needs – today, not only as table salt: "Salt is very versatile: we use it to season our food, de-ice the roads in winter or soften the water in the dishwasher. The raw material is also used in over 10,000 products. Salt is found in acids, dyes, glass, medicines, aluminium and PVC plastics. Because its use is so versatile, the Swiss Saltworks offer over 50 different products." (<https://www.salz.ch/de/unsere-marken>) It is important to know that table salt accounts for only about 9% of production, with the largest proportion of 30–50% being used to thaw roads.<sup>4</sup>

The homepage of the Swiss Saltworks describes in detail how the salt is extracted using modern technology. Here only briefly, so that we laymen can roughly imagine it: The salt layers are opened up by means



Salt in large quantities ... (Picture Swiss Saltworks/www.salz.ch)

of exploratory drillings, then the salt is leached out at depths of up to 400 metres with supplied water, and the concentrated salt solution is pumped up, softened and evaporated. (<https://www.salz.ch/en/salt-knowledge>)

### The cantons are the owners of the saltworks and protect the domestic production

Today, the Swiss Saltworks are owned by all 26 cantons and the Principality of Liechtenstein. Since salt cannot be mined everywhere in the country, the cantons have concluded a concordat (agreement between several or all cantons), as they always do when necessary. The Concordat of 1973 regulates the salt trade of the Swiss Saltworks and thus guarantees the supply of salt to all regions at favourable and uniform prices. Only Vaud (Waadt) did not join the concordat and continued operating its own saline in Bex. In 2014, *Swiss Saltworks on the Rhine AG* and *Saline de Bex SA* merged to form *Swiss Saltworks AG*. The 26 cantons and Liechtenstein hold 100 per cent of the shares. For each canton a current or former member of the government sits on the board of directors and the 27th seat is held by Liechtenstein. At the three locations Bex, Riburg (Canton of Aargau) and Schweizerhalle (Canton of Baselland), the saltworks produce up to 600,000 tons of salt per year. (<https://www.salz.ch/de/über uns>)

In order to be able to guarantee sufficient self-sufficiency at all times, especially with regard to the weather-dependent fluctuations in the demand for road salt in winter, the cantons protect their own pro-

duction from cheap imports via the Swiss Saltworks AG. The free quantity is 50 kg, for larger imports a written application must be submitted. Different tariffs are applied depending on the type of salt and the quantity imported. It is fascinating what is being imported: from herbal salts to flavoured and coloured bath salt mixtures to salt blocks for salt cave construction or salt lumps for sculptors.<sup>5</sup>

### The expected bottleneck and how it should be filled

"Switzerland is running out of salt, its own salt. Time is running out: The Swiss Saltworks need a replacement for the failed project under the MuttENZ Rütihard. The supply gap will arise from 2025 at the latest – in the calendar of salt production this is already tomorrow. The company is working at full speed to find alternatives." That's what we read recently well covered in the daily press.<sup>6</sup>

The facts: From 2025 there will indeed be a bottleneck, but only temporarily. The reason for this is the situation in Schweizerhalle, the largest and most productive saline in Switzerland. Schweizerhalle is located in the two communities of Pratteln and MuttENZ (Canton of Baselland) on the Rhine. A devastating chemical fire accident in 1986 made the place famous worldwide. But salt extraction took place in Schweizerhalle long before Basel's chemical industry set up its plants there. ("Schweizerhalle" is a former name for Swiss Saltworks). However, by around 2025 the three active drilling

### "Self-sufficiency with salt ..."

continued from page 11

fields in Schweizerhalle will be exhausted. The planned development of new underground salt fields in the neighbouring Rütihard area in MuttENZ would have covered the salt requirements for an estimated 25 years. But the resistance from the population for various reasons could not be overcome despite a long dialogue. On 30 June, the Swiss Saltworks announced that the Rütihard project would be postponed for about twenty years.<sup>7</sup>

Of course, the company has long since found an adequate alternative. Talks have been under way for quite some time now on the development of a new drilling field in the Fricktal (Canton of Aargau), not far from Schweizerhalle and also located on the Rhine. In the "Nordfeld" area there, 7.6 million tonnes of salt are to be extracted over a period of 30 years, so that Switzerland's supply is secured for about 30 years. As was already reported in February 2020, the population and the associations for environmental protection in the communities of Möhlin, Wallbach and Zeiningen are behind the project, as there is no reason to oppose it on environmental grounds.<sup>8</sup> "Salt mining is very important in the region," says *Fredy Böni*, the mayor of Möhlin, for example. As it is customary in Switzerland, the project is being developed in dialogue with the authorities, landowners, nature conservationists and farmers, and agreement is being sought on the route of the pipeline and the compensatory measures. In addition, a "nature fund Salzgut" will be set up, with which the Swiss Saltworks intend to invest one Swiss franc per tonne of mined salt, in order to promote local nature and landscape conservation projects and "give something back to nature". "If everything goes according to plan", wrote the "Aargauer Zeitung" in Febru-

ary 2020, "the building and drilling permits will be available within two years. In 2022, the Saltworks want to begin with the construction of the 5.5-kilometer-long transport pipeline. From 2026 the first of a total of around 50 volleyball-field-sized drilling sites is to go into operation."

Until the salt production in the Fricktal area gets into gear, there will indeed be a gap in self-sufficiency. Thereto *Köbi Frei*, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Schweizer Salinen AG and a long-standing member of the governing council of the Canton of Appenzell Ausserrhoden: "It will now be unavoidable for several years to import some salt. This will enable us to conserve our remaining salt stocks in MuttENZ, in the Fricktal and in Vaud for extraordinary situations that cannot be reliably handled by imports". Afterwards, however, the imports are no longer necessary, says *Köbi Frei*.<sup>9</sup>

### Is the salt monopoly of the cantons a hoary relic?

This is where some critics of the cantonal salt monopoly come in. According to *Michael Köpfli*, Secretary General of the Green Liberal Party of Switzerland, self-sufficiency is no longer guaranteed anyway. His recipe is to open the limits for salt imports at lower prices. He is currently trying to crack the salt monopoly in the canton of Bern and instigate party politicians in other cantons (Glarus, Lucerne, and Thurgau) to do so. A year and a half ago he announced on *Facebook*: "The salt monopoly is an anti-competitive relic from the Middle Ages. It leads to inflated prices for consumers and communities. Together with green liberals from various cantons, we are trying to crack this monopoly." (*Facebook* post of 7 February 2019). Then he goes one better: "It only takes one canton to bow out of the salt monopoly, and then it would collapse like a house of cards."<sup>10</sup>

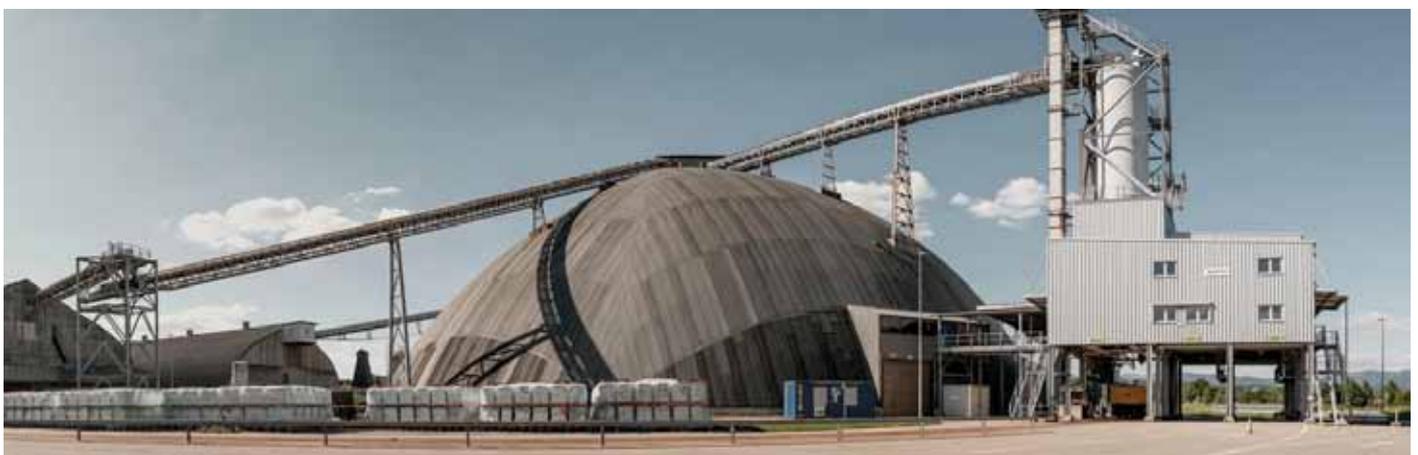
*Köpfli's* campaign may sound (economically) liberal, but certainly not green, aligned neither towards environmental protection and sustainability, nor towards a reliable public service for everyone.

On public service: "The salt monopoly is a relic from the Middle Ages?" The Swiss Saltworks reply: "From the Middle Ages, yes, relic no! There are good reasons why the cantons are maintaining the autonomous Swiss salt supply system even today. Whereas in the past the focus was primarily on ensuring food security while maintaining independence from foreign powers, today the focus is on ensuring mobility, especially in the winter months." This is "an important public service of the cantons and communities". In order to be able to rely on an optimally functioning winter mobility service, the guaranteed availability of de-icing salt as well as proximity to the supplier are a condition. (<https://www.salz.ch/de/ueber-uns/nutzen-des-salzregals>)

On sustainability: The fact that the production of salt in one's own country is more sustainable than imports should be obvious to anyone concerned about the environment. A scientific study published by the Swiss Saltworks in January 2019 on the life cycle assessment of various de-icing salts came to the conclusion that, compared with imports, Swiss salt has the best life cycle assessment in every respect, because: "Long transport routes from abroad are omitted. In addition, in Switzerland the salt is produced 100% with electricity from hydroelectric power."<sup>11</sup>

*Michael Köpfli's* motion failed in the Bernese Grand Council (cantonal parliament) because the "level of suffering was too small for communities suffering from high prices for road salt or consumers who paid more for table salt", said *Köpfli*, although this did not stop him from mak-

continued on page 13



The Riburg Saltworks near Rheinfelden/AG has been in operation since 1848 and specialises in the production of loose salt. It has one of the largest evaporators in Europe and can produce up to 50 tons of salt per hour. Here the road salt supply for the whole of Switzerland is ensured. On the right in the picture is Saldome 2, the largest wooden dome in Europe. Up to 100,000 tons of road salt are stored here. (Picture Swiss Saltworks/www.salz.ch)

**“Self-sufficiency with salt ...”**

continued from page 12

ing a second attempt in the fall.<sup>12</sup> A kilo of table salt with iodine and fluorine from the Swiss Jura at the *Landi* (agricultural cooperative) costs 95 cents. Swiss housewives don't really suffer, because they only use small amounts of salt when cooking and baking. Why reverse an established regulation?

Incidentally, there are also no legal reasons against the cantonal salt monopoly, according to the Federal Council in its response to a motion in the National Council in 2010. At international level, WTO law allows a commodity such as salt to be placed under a monopoly. At national level, the cantons' salt monopoly does not contravene the principle of economic freedom in Article 94 of the Federal Constitution, which in paragraph 4 expressly allows the cantons to deviate from it on the basis of their monopoly rights. Finally, the salt monopoly is not subject to federal antitrust law, because it is not of private law nature, but of public law nature.<sup>13</sup>

Again: Why reverse an established regulation?

**“An autonomous provision with basic supplies is worth its weight in gold”**

For Köbi Frei, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Swiss Saltworks, it is clear that salt imports will only be a temporary solution:

“The cantons are convinced that the rich salt deposits in our country should be used for self-sufficiency. This is demonstrably more reliable, more ecological and generally also more economical than imports.” And with reference to the experience during the Corona crisis: “We have to get away from imports as soon as possible. The experiences we have just made with the Covid-19 pandemic show that an autonomous provision with basic supplies is worth its weight in gold. For this reason, the Swiss government also classifies the Swiss Saltworks as a system and supply relevant company”. When asked whether it would be realistic to return to a purely domestic salt supply later, Köbi Frei replies: “Absolutely! We are sticking to the principle of a domestic salt supply. It is [...] a shining example of solidarity among the cantons. Dependence on imports always harbours a risk.”<sup>14</sup>

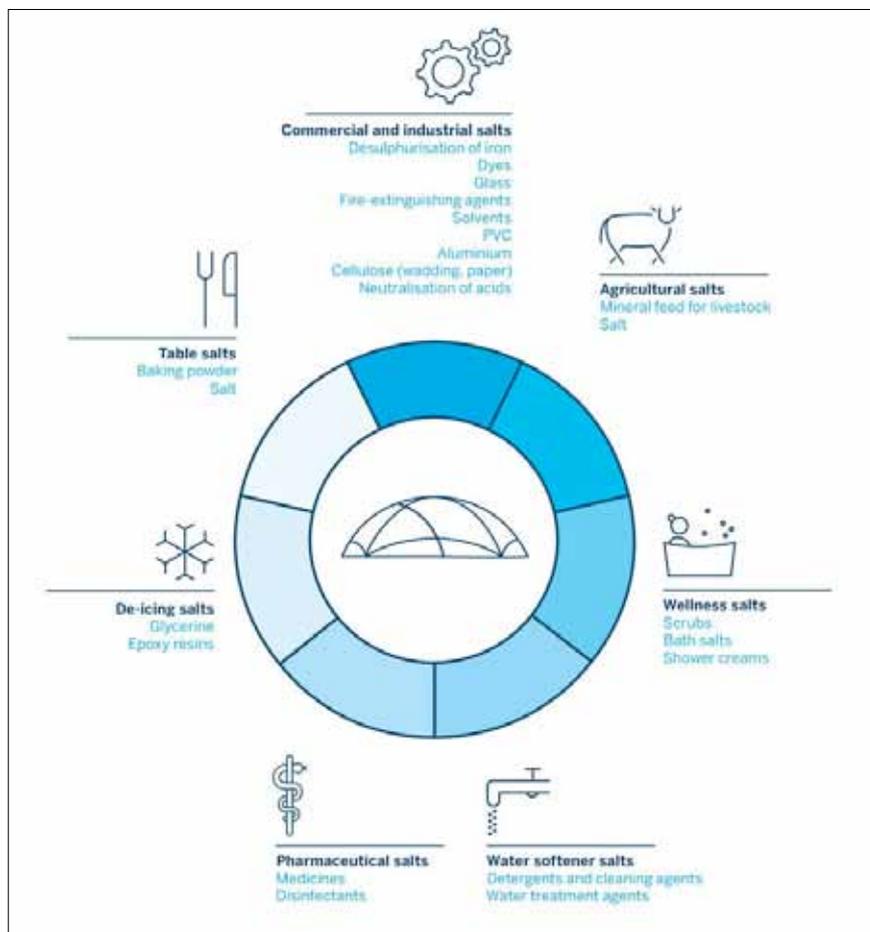
Focusing on the lower prices of imported products as an advantage for the population falls short – not only with salt. Chairman Frei rightly speaks of a “shining example” of solidarity among the cantons and the population, because “the Swiss Saltworks have consistent and therefore solidary-based prices which are stable. [...] In other words, it does not matter if you deliver to the nearby city of Basel or

to faraway Poschiavo; the price is always the same.” (<https://www.salz.ch/de/ueberuns/nutzen-des-salzregals>)

With this in mind, Government Councillor *Beatrice Simon*, who is a member of the Board of Directors of the Swiss Saltworks on behalf of the Canton of Berne, expresses her thanks. “Switzerland's salt supply is an exemplary expression of the fundamental idea of solidarity in our country. For a canton like Berne [with a large area and 342 communities, many of them in Alpine valleys, mw] the guaranteed supply of all winter services at the same conditions is of greatest value. Our thanks go to the communities in Aargau, Basel District and Vaud, which make the continued existence of our Saltworks possible and thus give independence to all Swiss cantons”.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bördlein, Ingeborg. «Ohne Salz würde der Mensch nicht überleben» (Man would not survive without salt.), in: *Die Welt* from 15 February 2008  
<sup>2</sup> Wüthrich, Marianne. „More solid self-sufficiency is the order of the day“; in: *Current Concerns* from 7 July 2020  
<sup>3</sup> «Wir brauchen Planungssicherheit für die Salzversorgung» (We need planning security for the salt supply), Interview with the president of the board of directors of the Swiss Saltworks, Köbi Frei, from 30 June 2020; <https://www.saline.ch/blog/wir-brauchen-planungssicherheit-fuer-die-salzversorgung/>  
<sup>4</sup> All about the Swiss Saltworks <https://www.salz.ch/>

<sup>5</sup> «Schweizer Salinen. Regeln und Verfahren für den Import von Salz in die Schweiz» (Swiss Saltworks. Rules and procedures for the import of salt into Switzerland) from 3 February 2014. [https://contenthub.salz.ch/sites/default/files/2020-06/Regeln\\_und\\_Verfahren\\_fur\\_den\\_Import\\_von\\_Salz\\_in\\_die\\_Schweiz.pdf](https://contenthub.salz.ch/sites/default/files/2020-06/Regeln_und_Verfahren_fur_den_Import_von_Salz_in_die_Schweiz.pdf)  
<sup>6</sup> Wieland, Benjamin. “White gold is urgently sought – why Switzerland is threatened with running out of its own salt”; in: *Newspaper for the region Basel bz* (Zeitung für die Region Basel bz), 20 July 2020  
<sup>7</sup> “We need planning security for the salt supply”, interview with Köbi Frei, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Swiss Saltworks, 30 June 2020  
<sup>8</sup> Wehrli, Thomas. “So that the salt does not melt away in the hands”; in: *Aargauer Zeitung am Wochenende*, 15 February 2020  
<sup>9</sup> “We need planning security for the salt supply”, interview with Köbi Frei, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Swiss Saltworks, 30 June 2020.  
<sup>10</sup> Schlegel, Yann. “GLP will staatliches Monopol der Salzgewinnung abschaffen“ (GLP wants to abolish state monopoly of salt production), in: *Luzerner Zeitung* from 8 February 2019  
<sup>11</sup> Schweizer Salinen. Ökobilanz-Studie. Schweizer Salz umweltfreundlicher als Importe (Swiss Saltworks. Life cycle assessment study. Swiss salt more environmentally friendly than imports) of 31 January 2019. (<https://www.salz.ch/de/loekobilanzstudie>)  
<sup>12</sup> Ritter, Pascal. “Grünliberale wollen Salzkartell knacken” (Green liberals want to crack salt cartel), in: *St. Galler Tagblatt* from 27 July 2020  
<sup>13</sup> 10.3842 Interpellation salt monopoly from 1 October 2010 in the National Council  
<sup>14</sup> “We need planning security for the salt supply”, interview with Köbi Frei, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Swiss Saltworks, on 30 June 2020  
<sup>15</sup> “Schweizer Salinen passen Abbauplanung an und sistieren Salzgewinnung unter der Rütihard” (Swiss Saltworks adapt mining plans and suspend salt production under the Rütihard) <https://www.saline.ch/blog> on 30 June 2020



*The Swiss Saltworks provide us with salt in all areas of life.  
 (Graphic Swiss Saltworks/www.salz.ch)*

# Why distance learning spoils the joy of learning

by Marianne Kutscher, Cologne

Our grandson *Jan* is a first grader and has lived with us for three years. He is fascinated by reading and arithmetic, grasps things quickly and enjoys learning. His teacher raves about her class to the highest notes, is very committed, popular and „down to earth“. Digital media have hardly played a role in her lessons so far. Since I am a retired teacher of special education, Jan had optimal conditions in distance learning with a professional reference person with time. During the first 2–3 weeks of school closure we had a lot of fun together, Jan managed his tasks quickly and with pleasure. He was very interested in the printed plans and worksheets.

In the morning, at our home, at 9 o'clock at the latest, "school" began, whereby Jan attached great importance to the fact that we did not play "school" and that I was not his teacher – because, as I feel it, his school and his teacher are "sacred" to him. Jan's teacher made sure that the material was prepared and conveyed as well as possible, usually by e-mail. She kept sending photos of the class animal, the zebra *Milo*, which, like the students, was not at school but at her home. Milo posed puzzles or tasks and immediately sent an echo again by e-mail. At first Jan thought it was great to hear from Milo, but soon the attraction was gone, and then he only took note of Milo's answers and didn't ask for them anymore. Unfortunately, during the whole weeks only one meeting with the teacher for about five minutes could take place in front of our door to hand over the assignments. Jan stood very „devoutly“ but reservedly at the door. He was happy about the reunion, but he held back his joy, that was my impression, because he knew that it would only be possible for a short time and who knows when again.

After the Easter holidays Jan started moaning when doing the tasks: Not again the pages for the new letter in the caribou, not again the worksheets, I'll do them this afternoon as "homework"! The "homework" was done about twice without grumbling. After that he didn't even feel like doing it anymore and postponed it to the evening or to the weekend. During this time the tasks contained more and more information about links to *you tube* films of about 3 minutes for subject lessons or explaining how to exceed or fall short of ten. Although the films were quite lively, Jan soon had little interest in them either. He was also given the task of working weekly with "Anton" or "An-

tolin", two learning programs for reading and arithmetic, with which one can acquire points, but they too had quickly lost their initial appeal, just like the reading passport, with which one can get a pearl from the teacher on the day of the "attendance lessons" with the ten-minute reading exercises acknowledged by the parents.

Also during the reading exercises I realised what was missing: the human contact with the teacher and the classmates, speaking loudly and clearly so that the others understand, the others, who are listening, the confirmation or even correction and encouragement by the teacher, listening to the classmates reading, perceiving that they too are making mistakes ...! Jan only read his homework silently, the grandmother was no substitute for the class community! Finally a mother had the idea to organise *zoom* conferences of the class. At the first conference the microphone on our mobile phone did not work and on my already somewhat older laptop there was no camera yet, to sum up: Jan saw his teacher like on TV, not as she "lives and breathes", but as "conserved". All the fine signals between teacher and students and the infinite facets of wordless communication, which in real lessons convey a friendly, warm, encouraging, intensive, dialogical atmosphere, are not possible digitally. Jan saw some of his classmates in nervous picture changes and some of them were hardly to be understood. Jan himself does not like to appear in front of the camera, as a result he did not appear in the "conferences". He did not ask for another conference. His friend *Tim*, his mother reported, wanted to have nothing to do with these meetings on the PC. Jan's "unwillingness" to work became stronger and stronger. It really hurt me to see how he was increasingly losing his joy in learning and his mood was deteriorating. Since he correctly did what the teacher demanded, no more and no less – which shows the strong orientation of the children towards the teacher – I did not get through to him with my attempts to make the whole thing more creative. Because the teacher didn't have time to look up all the worksheets on the day of attendance, Jan considered not working on them any more. But when his friend reported that she had checked them on another day, he changed his mind. For the first time he had the remark under a sheet that he should pay more attention to his writing. He set no great store by my suggestion to write more orderly, so now his writing

went a little "downhill". I decided to invite Jan's friend on Tuesdays and Thursdays to study together. That was the "rescue"! The parents were relieved, because they were both in the home office and still had another schoolchild at home and Tim showed the same "symptoms of displeasure" as Jan. Immediately everything was different, the memory of learning together came back and with it the joy. Both sat down directly and started their work, exchanged about the contents, made their jokes, spurred each other on and hurried. Through their cooperation I could vividly imagine how things were going in the class. Jan literally blossomed! The friendship that had developed at school and had come to a standstill in the last few weeks became alive again. On the days when Tim didn't come, the same mood of unpleasure and rejection came back to Jan. Once again this time made me more aware of the immense importance of the teacher as the first reference person after the parents and that learning without a real relationship lacks "life" and that school cannot be replaced by anything! •

## Current Concerns

The international journal for independent thought, ethical standards, moral responsibility, and for the promotion and respect of public international law, human rights and humanitarian law

Publisher: Zeit-Fragen Cooperative

Editor: Erika Vögel, Eva-Maria Föllmer-Müller

Address: Current Concerns,

P.O. Box, CH-8044 Zurich

Phone: +41 (0)44 350 65 50

Fax: +41 (0)44 350 65 51

E-Mail: [CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch](mailto:CurrentConcerns@zeit-fragen.ch)

Subscription details:

published regularly electronically as PDF file

Annual subscription rate of

SFr. 40,-, € 30,-, £ 25,-, \$ 40,-

for the following countries:

Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Canada, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hongkong, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Qatar, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, USA

Annual subscription rate of

SFr. 20,-, € 15,-, £ 12,50, \$ 20,-

for all other countries.

Account: Postscheck-Konto: PC 87-644472-4

The editors reserve the right to shorten letters to the editor. Letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of *Current Concerns*.

© 2020. All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

# 10,000 years of food culture

## From economical use to carefree waste

by Heini Hofmann

*Thanks to archaeozoology, the study of slaughter and kitchen waste, food culture can be traced back up to 10,000 years. Conclusion: over the course of time, man was increasingly less wild about game; instead, his table manners became more and more extravagant.*

Such a relaxed approach to animal resources runs parallel to increasing meat consumption based on farmed animals instead of wild animals. The menu of our ancestors since prehistoric times is now reconstructed with the most modern methods of archaeozoology, using food waste, especially bones. This allows conclusions to be drawn about eating habits, hunting selection among wild animals, age of the farm animals on slaughter and cutting methods.

### Examples from four epochs

In the course of evolution, man has developed into a food specialist, a mixed food eater with good opportunities to use protein-rich food of animal origin. The dentition and digestive system speak for this. In the beginning, game was one of the possibilities to enrich food energetically.

Over four epochs it can be traced how game lost its importance with the rise of livestock farming and increasing civilisation. While in the Mesolithic period meat consumption was exclusively covered by game and fish, in the Neolithic period this was just a good third of the consumption. In the Middle Ages, the proportion of game in total meat consumption fell to a modest five per cent, and today it is still just over one per cent.

### Hunters of the Mesolithic Age

When the last ice age came to an end, a shrubby tundra spread over the territory of present-day Switzerland, slowly giving way to emerging forest growth. That was 8000 to 5000 years before our time. The people of the Mesolithic period roamed the region, living in caves and tents, as nomadic hunters through a region rich in forests and game. They made tools and weapons from flint.

The meat content of their food consisted of one hundred per cent venison. One such settlement site of the Mesolithic was the Birmatten Base Grotto near Nenzlingen, in a rock cave in the Birstal. The "waste zoologists" found over 15,000 bones and splinters during the excavations, of which just under 2,000 could be identified.

### No waste

Although small bones and fishbones are badly preserved, it could be concluded



*The archaeozoology reconstructs the menu of our ancestors on the basis of slaughter and kitchen waste from the distant past. (Picture NMB)*

ed that the Birmatten inhabitants based their hunting grounds on beavers, otters, fish and frogs from the river Birs, deer and wild boar from the valley floor and chamois from the Jura heights. When they ate their haunch with fruits and nuts, they were probably not thinking of nouvelle cuisine ...

But there was one thing they were far superior to us, namely their thriftiness, their economical use of the laboriously captured resources. Prey animals were exploited to the last detail, even the smallest bones were opened to make use of the fat-rich marrow. What would the Mesolithic people think if they saw how today's consumer society treats offal, udders, pig's feet and sometimes even calves' heads as slaughterhouse waste, or how it disposes of male day-old chicken and old soup chickens on a massive scale?

The archaeozoologists came to the same conclusion at all the settlement sites in the Birs Valley: wild boar and deer dominated the menu, ahead of beavers, roe deer, chamois and badgers. Other Mesolithic settlements in the Central Plateau differed from the Jurassic ones in the wild boar hit parade: more elk, but no chamois.

### Huntsman-farmers of the Neolithic period

Around 5000 B.C. the first "change-oriented" people lived; they turned everything upside down. Instead of chasing the animals, they tamed and bred them, and

cultivated plants. Thus they became sedentary cattle breeders and farmers who changed the landscape by clearing the land. More often they built their settlements near lakes, which made water transport and fishing possible.

Their household goods also became more comfortable: finely crafted tools made of materials such as flint, bone and deer antlers, complemented by clay vessels. The Twann settlement area on Lake Biel is known from the Neolithic period, around 5000 to 2000 years BC. More than 200,000 bones have been excavated here, which, together with found plant remains, have resulted in archaeological food lists.

### More beef, less venison

The species could be determined from around 14,000 bone finds. Domestic animals now dominated on the menu with 65 per cent compared to game. The largest supplier of meat, milk and fertilizer was cattle, ahead of sheep and goats. Nevertheless, hunting still played a prominent role with 35 per cent game, especially the red deer. But also wild boar and deer supplied animal protein. In addition, the Neolithic people consumed cultivated and collected wild plants.

Even back then, there was something like food landscapes with considerable variations on the menu: for example, the Neolithic settlers at Lake Burgäschi (not

**"10,000 years of food culture"**

continued from page 15

far from today's Museum of Game and Hunting at Landshut Castle, Utzenstorf) lived almost exclusively on wild animals, while the meat ration of their contemporaries from the lower Lake Zurich was based on domestic animals to the tune of eighty per cent. Goldcoast even then?

**Farm hunters of the Middle Ages**

At the time of the foundation of the Swiss Confederation, cattle breeding dominated, and yet the hunter's lust was by no means extinguished, so that it is no coin-



*The supply of meat from game has been steadily decreasing since the Mesolithic period, as more and more farm animals became meat suppliers. Today, the proportion of game meat is just over one per cent. (Picture NMB)*

**Pets versus wild animals**

hh. After the last ice age, venison still played a central role in the diet (especially deer, wild boar, roe deer and bear), but in the course of civilization more and more domestic animals became meat suppliers (cattle, pigs, sheep and goats). Today, grazing plays only a marginal role in nutritional terms. The agriculturally produced meat has replaced the meat grown in the wild. At the same time, consumer habits have changed, from thrifty use to carefree wastage. If we used the carcasses of our farm animals as thoroughly as the Stone Age people used their wild animal prey (then almost one hundred per cent, today only 50 per cent), we would need much fewer slaughter animals, with positive ecological and economic consequences. Perhaps our wasteful consumption of farm animals would have to return to the close-to-nature customs of hunting!

idence that *William Tell* is characterised as a chamois hunter when his son *Walther* sings the song "Mit dem Pfeil, dem Bogen" and hunter *Werni* asserts "Das wissen wir, die wir die Gemen jagen".

"Just stay away from there today. You'd better go hunting", Hedwig advises her Tell, and he himself growls into his beard, while he lurks for Gessler behind the elder bush: "The projectile was only aimed at the forest animals, my thoughts were pure of murder". However, one thing is certain: twenty kilometres east of Bürglen, beeline, where Tell is said to have lived at 1650 metres above sea level, above the Braunwald in Glarus, there was the "Alp desert" of Bergeten, of which more details are known.

**Primary cattle, marginal game**

In the 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century this settlement was inhabited in the summer half of each year. The Alpine pastoral population left little waste: a few horseshoes and only 500 bones, of which less than 300 could be identified. At least it could be determined: Meat suppliers on Bergeten were the milkable horn-carriers, primarily cattle, but also goats and sheep.

Findings of bones and hunting weapons indicated that there was also hunting, namely bear, chamois, marmot and hare. Which also means that *Schiller* did thorough research for his "Tell". But that the hunt was already on the downward spiral is also proven by other excavations from the same period in the Alps and the Central Plateau. The proportion of veni-

son in the meat consumed was only five per cent.

**Consumers of the present**

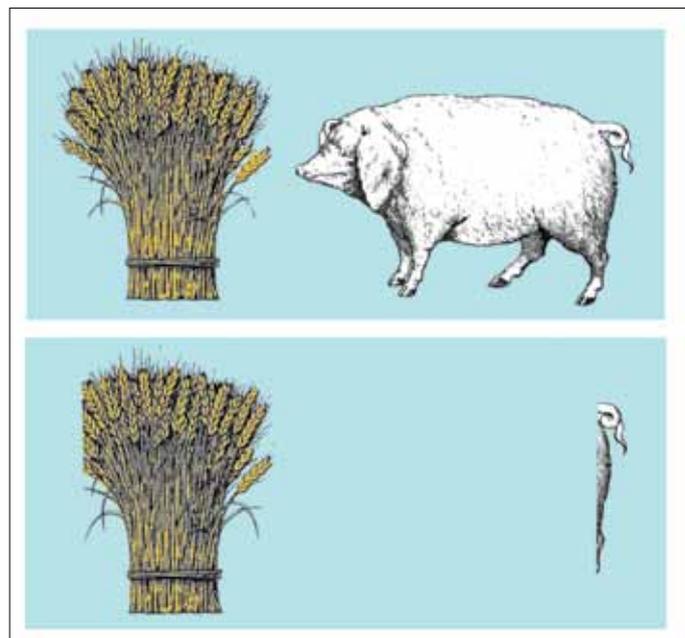
Centuries after our time, archaeozoology may well have an even more difficult time; although our consumer and throwaway society leaves behind an infinite amount of food waste (around five million tons), not so much in the form of bones as canned food.

Game plays only a marginal role on the plate of modern society, just over one per cent of all meat consumed. Appropriately, the meat statistics are as follows, more than 440,000 tons of carcass weight of farm animals and a good 70,000 tons of fish, molluscs and crustaceans are offset by around 5,000 tons of game (furred game and feathered game).

**One third of a sod**

Of the approximately 5000 tons of total game, about 2800 tons are imported (mostly from farmed animals) and only about 2200 tons are taken from the native wildlife. The Helvetic fenced game farms (fallow deer) contribute about 60 tons.

The current annual meat consumption (boneless) of an average Swiss person is a good 50 kilogrammes, almost twice as much as at the end of the last world war. However, only just under 500 grammes, less than one per cent of this comes from wild animals, and thereof in turn only just under 200 grammes from local hunting. In contrast, the average Swiss devours one third of a sow per year, except for the meat of other farm animals. •



*Although we eat less game today, we eat more meat overall and plenty of everything that a comparison between Central Europeans and Equatorial Africans shows, namely an extreme north-south gradient in food calories: The average Swiss person (above) consumes per capita and day 9209 kJ (kilojoules) of plant products and 5940 kJ of animal products, the inhabitant at the equator only 8552 plant kJ and no less than 138 animal kJ, i.e. 43 times less. Metaphorically speaking, the pig does not leave him much more than the tail. (Picture NMB)*