… before it even stands – a few thoughts on the most recent example of censorship

In mid-August, I reviewed the book „*Angst, Politik, Zivilcourage*„, edited by T.A. Seidel and S. Kleinschmidt in the Evangelische Verlagsanstalt review [1]. The review was originally published in the online newspaper „*Achse des Guten*„. I had expressed a faint hope at the time: What Ms. Lengsfeld, who is also represented in the book with a contribution, and her friends had achieved after the fall of communism – namely a political round table – that could perhaps begin with this book as a „Corona Round Table“ – as the beginning of a critical but binding reappraisal of the political decisions that went wrong during the corona crisis. This hope has now been dashed. The Protestant Church is smashing the round table to pieces before it is even finished.

On Monday, 11/27/2023, „*Tichys Einblick*“ published: Under pressure from the „*Evangelische Kirche in Mitteldeutschland*“ and the „*Gemeinschaftswerk der Evangelischen Publizistik*„, both of which are shareholders in the Evangelisches Verlagswerk, where the book was published, delivery of the book was halted. The reason for this: In some contributions, „red lines“ had been crossed by „contempt for democracy“ and „anti-Semitism“. The book therefore were „a serious mistake“ from which they wanted to learn. Those responsible justified the book censorship in a press release at the beginning of November.

This reminds me of the language of forced self-incrimination. Those responsible know best themselves whether they actually acted out of honest conviction or because of external pressure. But one thing I do know: withdrawing a book from circulation that analyzes the lack of discourse in a democratic state and calls for new discussions is in itself contempt for democracy.

When were book burnings and indexing carried out? Does that ring a bell with some of those responsible? The last political movement in Germany to ban and destroy books (and art) for political reasons was the Nazis. The Catholic Church indexed books that contradicted its claim to sole representation. In the past, these included the works of Luther. More recently, I mean compared to the eons of the Catholic era, i.e. in the 1940s and 1950s, the Catholic Church ended the discourse with the natural sciences by indexing the works of Teilhard de Chardin.

Who exactly uses the means of book censorship? And when exactly is it done? It always happens when someone feels threatened, and it is always the powerful who feel threatened. Those who feel safe do not need to exercise censorship. Metternich in the pre-revolutionary

era, Fouché after the French Revolution: the chief censors of recent history were generally police officers who had to or wanted to strengthen the corset of crumbling regimes.

What is under threat? The democratic discourse? Which never existed in the first place because the government could simply rule as it wished with decrees and laws that were frighteningly similar in speed and structure to the Reichstag Enabling Act?

So who or what is threatened? What is under threat is a construct: the construct that the government was right in its decisions on coronavirus policy, whether it was the repeated lockdowns or agreeing to the social and moral pressure of a vaccination technology that was pushed through the approval machinery on feet of clay.

In Switzerland, the online magazine „Infosperber“ is currently investigating the dodgy, scientifically proven false modeling of Viola Priesemann’s working group, which allegedly confirmed the effectiveness of the lockdown measures. These models have confirmed nothing, because they have demonstrably worked with false data. Ms. Priesemann admitted this, but she never retracted the work. We published this some time ago and documented it in detail in a paper that I have already mentioned several times in the journal „Futures“ [2]. The „Infosperber article“ by Martina Frei cites a whole series of much more prominent critical voices than we are.

Four of the six most-read articles in the Swiss weekly newspaper „Weltwoche“ (you have to go to the bottom of the page to find them) deal with issues surrounding the false information that was spread about the coronavirus vaccinations at the time (1; 2; 3; 4). And, no, ladies and gentlemen fact-checkers and desperate EKD truth-seekers: „Weltwoche“ is not a populist diatribe from the right, but a liberal-conservative organ that has been around for almost a hundred years.

There are now 20 studies, all of which show that the side effects after Covid-19 vaccinations are significantly and drastically higher than in unvaccinated controls. The side effects are serious: myocarditis, especially in young men; shingles due to immunosuppression; thrombotic events and embolisms; to name just the most important [3]. And the careful analysis of Fraiman and colleagues has definitely shown: The risk of getting a severe side effect from vaccination is greater than the risk of being hospitalized with Covid-19 disease [4]. Not to mention mortality.

The majority of those in positions of political responsibility and, above all, in the ranks of church decision-making bodies, which are not exactly overflowing with medical-critical competence, should now really take note: To extol vaccination as salvation, to pull and push the population towards it by handing out sausages and beating them, and then even to vaccinate children and young people, to praise vaccination as an act of charity and to make

churches available for it, that was a capital and fatal political-medical mistake. You could learn from the Bible, ladies and gentlemen of the EKD and their Catholic equivalents in the dioceses: if you don’t admit wrongdoing as soon as it becomes obvious, but try to cover it up first, then even greater wrongdoing is the result. See King David and his transgression with Bathsheba, the wife of his captain Uriah, 2 Sam 11. As a reminder: David covets the wife of his captain Uriah and sleeps with her. She becomes pregnant. To conceal the pregnancy, David has Uriah return from the camp so that he can sleep with his wife. Unfortunately, he doesn’t do this, but stays with his soldiers. David then sends him to the front, where he perishes. It takes the prophet Samuel’s warning call for David to wake up and repent. All because he wanted to cover up his first misstep.

In view of these facts, you have to be extremely blind to fail to recognize the value of a contribution to the discussion such as this book represents. I repeat what I said in my review: Many contributions are provocative. But none of them are nonobjective or factually incorrect, as far as I can tell. Some of the language is harsh. In some contributions, the authors have visibly lost their cool. But that’s just the nature of things. If you’ve been taken for a fool for two years, you might open your mouth too wide. I wouldn’t have noticed any anti-Semitism or hostility to democracy in this text. You have to conjure up both by conjuring up some connection out of context. And even if this had been the case: Shouldn’t this shortcoming have been noticed and rectified when the text was checked for publication? Apparently it was just a few passages that were criticized.

In the way this is done, one must rather assume that: Someone high up, either in the church hierarchy or in the political hierarchy has come down too hard on this book, but only now. And there is a dutiful reaction.

With this virtual book-burning, the Protestant church has betrayed the anti-dictatorial heritage of the confessing church. Only a minority of church representatives, Protestant and Catholic, rebelled against the political majority opinion during the National Socialist dictatorship. They ended up in concentration camps for it. Later, these martyrs were used to whitewash the churches, whether they were exceptional figures such as Bonnhöffer or the Kreisau Circle or, on the Catholic side, Franz Jägerstätter and others. People forget that it is the cowardice of the silent majority that makes totalitarian regimes possible. And it is very easy to forget that the burgeoning totalitarianism hides behind the mask of democratic legitimacy. In my view, both churches have become blind to these dangers in their emphatically submissive loyalty to the state.

I hear that the book is to be reissued, this time with the voices of the critics. I think that’s a very good idea. Because that’s the only way to create discourse. There is no need to ban foolish talk and false arguments. They usually disavow themselves, because anyone with a

bit of brains and open eyes will usually recognize them. I therefore wish the publishers success in their endeavor to republish the book together with critical voices.

Sources and literature

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