

## The meaning of democracy?

*A point of view from Jochen Mitschka.*

Not the quality, but the implementation of self-determination is decisive.

Again and again it is emphasized that the quality of politics can only be kept high with the professional machinery of the political parties and their primacy of politics (1). Now there are enough examples that the so-called political elite has made horribly wrong decisions, but then still hangs medals around each other's necks. Each of you should have examples in mind. But that is not the point. No, the realization of democracy does not have the goal of realizing the "best possible" policy. Because "best possible" will always be defined subjectively from the point of view of the observer. So it is not the "optimal" policy that is the actual goal of democracy, but the realization of people's self-determination. And the result is a policy that is supported by all people, that generates loyalty to the state, that also makes political change possible without bloodshed.

If it were a matter of making the "best possible" decision, the electoral system would also be absurd. Then one would have to introduce capability tests that would first entitle the voters to vote. Perhaps professors should be given more voting rights than an obviously ignorant voter, although I will not give any examples here in order not to discriminate. It is not about knowledge and understanding alone. It is about people feeling integrated and knowing that their voice has weight.

In her speech in 2010, in which Angela Merkel invoked the "primacy of politics" and declared that the parties make politics and that the people have to nod off politics (1), she revealed a diametrically opposed understanding of politics and an elitist point of view. Such a view in no way distinguishes today's politicians from the "benevolent monarchs" of the Middle Ages. But they claim that anything else would lead to chaos, that a new Hitler would come, or that the economy would go under in international competition if one did not pursue a policy "for the markets".

In other words, the politicians of the established parties are not about the people. Their aim is to pursue a policy that is accepted by "the markets", the oligarchs of this world who determine them, and not that people can identify with this policy. And finally, the media ensure that people accept decisions that are made by the parties against their own wishes and interests.

This is what this "representative democracy" is all about, in which the sovereign may not directly determine the government by which he wants to be governed, nor the president who is to represent him worldwide, and who acts as the final hurdle before the constitutional court in drafting laws. Apropos constitutional court, the citizen may not determine that either. Everything mentioned is determined by a "party consensus", not by the will of the voter. And that must be so, according to the parties, otherwise Hitler would return. And so that the media (that is to say, those who are not under the control of large corporations) do not do anything stupid, the voter must not have a say when it comes to the public legal media, which are also controlled by the parties.

Oh yes, and if the voter got more rights, that would be quite dangerous, because then the evil right-wing populists would win. I always have to laugh at it in silence, because no misfortune, no crime, no terrorist attack goes by without new laws being demanded and developed, or politicians in the front line demanding any measures, which they could have introduced with foresight long ago.

In other words, the parties took over the state in a silent coup. This can be seen not least in the fact that the political foundations of the parties, mistakenly called "non-governmental organisations" even on government websites, although they also belong to the governing parties and are financed by the government, will soon devour perhaps over a thousand million euros, i.e. 1 billion. Of course, this is only in the interest of all Germans, of course.

Now it is often argued that one can get involved in political parties or found one oneself. That is the most ridiculous of all objections. Everyone knows that only those who submit to the consensus of a) the party and b) the consensus of the parties among themselves will rise up the career ladder of the party. And what becomes of "new" parties can be seen in the party Bündnis90/Die Grünen or the Piratenpartei. Even the Left Party, which could have been able to become a real alternative due to its large existing base, is experiencing increasing domestication and adaptation to party consensus through its leadership. The acceptance of the party consensus has long been secret with many leading personalities of the party, well aware that without it one has no chance to play a part in the big politics.

In the past it was the birthright, but today it is the right attitude that enables a rise into the political aristocracy. Visions, commitment to the people or abilities no longer play a role. How one can experience daily with many examples. When a drug commissioner declares in an interview that she does not know that soft drugs have been liberalised in Portugal, this is just one of many indications. This does not mean that there are not exceptions in ALL political parties, most of them perhaps in the Left Party. People who have humanist convictions, who try to fulfil the will of their voters, who stand up for a policy that is not more acceptable for "the markets" but for the sovereign. But they are the showpieces of politics, the tolerated exceptions.

Let's face it: the policy implemented by these our politicians could hardly be worse. Take transport policy with expected millions of dollars in damages for the taxpayer, or foreign policy with a complete submission to the wishes of the USA at the expense of our economy and security, or look at social policy, where attempts are made to entice nurses from developing countries without language skills, instead of academicizing and reasonably rewarding education in Germany as in other countries. So we prefer brain drain, modern slave trade at the expense of poor countries. And when we realise that politics can hardly be worse, then it sounds cynical to claim that only the parties can ensure that a high-quality policy is pursued.

It is the clinging of politics to its power and its fiefdoms, the attempt to obtain an elevated position that would be lost if the politicians really had to subordinate themselves to the will of the people. If politicians were obliged to execute (or resign if they cannot reconcile this with their consciences)

the policies given to them by the sovereign, the nimbus of the "thinking ahead" politician would be gone. Yes, then those would be the masterminds who explain politics to people in an understandable way and make it clear to them what is the most advantageous politics for them.

And here we are again with the media. Any democracy, whether direct and real, or fake and so-called "parliamentary", can only work if voters have all the necessary information. And that is not the case at the moment. In other words, it doesn't matter whether we have a democracy or not, as long as the media doesn't really provide pluralistic and complete (not quantity, but quality) coverage of reality, it doesn't matter whether we vote or not, whether there is a plebiscitary democracy, which, by the way, would be a form of democracy that holds politicians accountable or not. The result will always be the same.

The first steps towards a true democracy worthy of the name would therefore be a fundamental reform of the media. This has already been written about in detail elsewhere. (2) Unfortunately, that is impossible. For breaking the power of the parties over the Public-Law Media is being destroyed by the alliance of the leaders brought to power by the parties in these media, together with the consensus between the parties. And the private media have no interest in suddenly facing competition. Private media following the unspoken principles: Russia is the opponent, the USA is the liberator and guarantor of democracy, NATO is irreplaceable for defence, neoliberalism is necessary to maintain the high foreign trade deficit, the rich are doing well, the poor benefit from it, and much more. So the case is hopeless?

That would actually be a pity, because self-determination is a human right. But we cannot achieve this without genuine democracy and the necessary media. But the more people doubt the dogma of the parties, the more likely it is that the pressure of conformity, i.e. the group pressure with which people are made to think like the given opinion, will soften. Solomon Asch's attempts have shown this, and this is still valid today (3).

At the moment people who shout "The emperor is naked" are silenced. At first simply ignored, and drowned out with the din of the mass media, then slandered and finally persecuted. But the more people realize that the emperor has no clothes on, the more the pressure of conformity will one day give way and the parties will have to follow the will of the sovereign and surrender a large part of their power.

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**Sources:**

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