

## **Speech on the attacks upon the freedom of speech after Charlie Hebdo**

If we discuss today the topic of freedom of expression and the various attacks on it as symptoms of a democracy thoroughly rotten by now and that after the revolting and disgusting attack on the members of Charlie Hebdo, we should, first of all, turn our attention to so-called fundamentalism.

Concerning fundamentalism, we must not make a certain mistake: we should not consider it to be particularly evil, because it is not fundamentalism that is evil, but in fact religion that is evil. Fundamentalism merely means to take religion serious, to be an honest believer instead of a wayward one; so, what matters is the contents of that what is believed. And there is another aspect that should warn us not to focus on fundamentalism of belief, but on belief itself. Why? Because there is no more than one really convinced fanatic among 20 or 50 persons, who are not fanatic themselves, but who are definition-evaders, and it was exactly this silent base formed by such definition- and articulation-evaders that made e.g. consciously Hitler become powerful. The same is true for religion. Not the fanatics, not the fundamentalists, not the persons who consciously take religion serious are the problem; it is the far larger number of persons who evade any rational and moral evaluation of religion that are a bigger threat, a bigger evil to anything that is desirable for humanity, more than the worst of all fundamentalists. For, only if definition-evaders evade taking decisions, the fundamentalists will get the opportunity to decide. Articulation-evaders are the worst threat to mankind, fundamentalists maybe a secondary threat. For, without a big silent body of definition-evaders around them, who behave half-reasonably and half-heartedly and so became "semi-believers", fundamentalists will stay helpless, at least silent.

Religion is evil, because religion is hostile to freedom and human dignity. It is opposed to freedom, because we cannot be self-governed if we are submissive to religious commandment. It is against human dignity, because it put some alpha ape on the top of moral evaluation, irrespective if this celestial alpha ape does exist or not, and not the principle of equity and reciprocity; it mirrors feudalism or simian society, not Rousseau's *contrat social*. The second basic vice of religion is that its statements are simply wrong: and imposing statements that are obviously wrong and whose faults are easily detected by reason is against human dignity, because it won't work without crushing one's mind and reason what is, in consequence, necessarily or at least favourably done in childhood, be it by simple violence, be it by emotional pressure or be it by trickery. Once implemented religions infect the way to observe things and to feel or think, they spoil or try to spoil any early self-experiment, especially when they are allowed to take effect on childrens' brains as the state-privileged major religions are, namely Christianity and Islam. But as the currency of Christianity after a long

period of relentless mental and physical terror lost its value thanks to the achievements of the French Revolution, its untamed colleagues from the Islam fraction are used as a rammer, or Rambo, to revalue religion again in the more or less secular states of Western Europe. Because of its usefulness for this purpose, as was to be observed in so many examples for about the last 30 years, Islam is constantly pampered by the press that declares that we have to be "reerespectful" towards its religious impertinences, be it the religious headscarf as an expression of unequal treatment of the sexes, be it religious food taboos on school meals, be it "honour crimes" encouraged by ridiculously lenient punishments, or even the deliberate destruction of physical integrity, as done by genitally mutilating female and male children, the latter having been officially legalized by the German government in 2012). All these examples are acts of severe violations of basic human rights, but exactly for this reason are extoled in the name of respect for religious feelings, i.e. lasting effects of early brainwashing and experienced violence, or in the name of respect for different "cullltures" or of "multiculllturalism". No wonder that religious persons are becoming more and more encouraged to behave aggressively like classical fundamentalists who otherwise would be standing in a corner, sadly mourning over their incomplete pricks instead of killing people who are far better than themselves because they could save their mental integrity or at least are suspected to have succeeded to do so.

This interplay of governmental backing and the press's constant flattering and pampering Islamic impertinence leads us back to the Charlie Hebdo crime. If we want to understand what happened, we must go back to 1989 when Khomeini issued his call for murder, the so-called fatwa, against Salman Rushdie. Probably all of you remember the incitation for killing the author of *The Satanic Verses*, but what you certainly don't remember is that Khomeini, far from being stupid or disconnected from reality, made a test run before. In Germany, he attacked Rudi Carell, the popular host of a well-known TV show, stemming from the Netherlands. In one of these shows, Carell had presented a short satirical spot showing some veiled Moslem women hunting for underwear in a department store while in the background a film sequence shows Khomeini preaching. For this more than innocent mockery – in fact, it was not by preaching but by state-backed vitriol attacks that he intimidated the population – Khomeini demanded an apology. And? ..., he got it. Carell begged Khomeini's pardon, and the press came to Khomeini's aid with articles that were full of understanding for what he declared to be "hurting of religious sentiments". (Never forget the artificial and secondary character of these obscure sentiments that can't be else than the result of successful violence; and what about the anti-Semitic sentiments stemming from exactly the same roots and resulting from the appliance of exactly the same methods, but since WW II, though never before in a powerful way, outlawed instead of pampered and extoled? Irrationalism, however, *always* deserves the *same* measure!)

If Khomeini had been given a rap over his knuckles **immediately, which would have been so easy to achieve at that very moment**, the whole ghastly nightmare that followed would have been nipped in the bud. And all the more so as even half the Arabian world laughed openly or furtively about Khomeini and the mockery.

**It was only then, after this test run, that Khomeini got cheeky and openly bloodthirsty.**

Encouraged as he was, he issued his call for murder against the author of *The Satanic Verses*. The reaction of the western heirs of the Enlightenment was as cowardly and undignified as before. So the attacked author was hidden and deprived of any possibility to express his opinion publicly (freedom of expression, isn't it!?) and that at the very moment when the public's attention was at its very height.

It was just as if he had already been killed, but actually not because of the fatwa, but because of the betrayal resp. feigned cowardice of the US-dependent states. His books remained withdrawn from the counters of many book shops. The German translation of the incriminated book was not even published before two years (!) after the call for murder had been issued. When we presented our book 'Salman Rushdie – Portrait eines Dichters' (also available in English under the title 'Salman Rushdie – Portrait of a Poet') by Peter Priskil at the Frankfurt Book Fair, the largest event of this kind worldwide, the organizers had neither invited Rushdie, nor was he awarded the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade as a sign of solidarity. The atmosphere created by the authorities was openly hostile to everybody who defended Rushdie as a representative of freedom of expression aggressively attacked by religion. So, for instance, the director of the book fair banned our leaflet entitled "The Most Important Author is not Represented" which we wanted to distribute in protest against the ordered oblivion and the attacked victim's exclusion from the book fair in favour of militant Islam.

So, in order to summarize these events, we could say: if you are attacked, you must shoot back immediately, if a religious foul is committed on you, you have to show the red card, as had been normal and usual all the centuries since 1789 before. If you detect a cancer, you must remove it at once, because otherwise it will produce metastases. Without the treacherous prostration of those states pretending to be the heirs of the Enlightenment (hypocritically and misleadingly called "Western values"), we would not be in the situation of today, when we have to mourn for the victims of Charlie Hebdo, who otherwise would still be alive.

And as this willing prostration before religion was prepared and flanked by a press campaign that always pampered the Islamic impertinences in the name of "culture!" or of "religious sentiments that must be respected", we can say, applying a German pun, that the Charlie Hebdo victims are actually the victims of the "Fairständnis-Pressse". (This pun is based on the insinuation that it would

be “fair” to abstain from criticizing religious bullshit or aggressions [i.e. “having *Verständnis* for them” as a German idiomatism put it]. The word *Fairständnis* since long entered German newspeak.)

So the question is: what is to be done against religion? As religion infects our way to contemplate, to feel, to think and to develop imagination, only a solid base of sensual and intellectual knowledge of nature and history can be an antidote against this impertinent, foolish, but state-backed impact of religion. Knowledge of nature, because it's only nature, following its own rules without being man-made. Therefore we can say: there is no religion in it, it is not baptized or circumcised, and thus an universal example for not being baptized nor physically-religiously mutilated. But for this purpose nature must be existent, one must have the possibility to sensually touch and experience it; if it is destroyed like nowadays or kept under sterile protection rules, it will become as mysterious as a holy celebration act. But if observation is possible and done with tenacity and the aim to obtain a general idea of it, we can be rewarded by an increase of intellectual knowledge and mental recovery.

For this sake, the museums of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the very century when, on the one hand, the influence of religion was weakening and, on the other hand, the results of systematic observation were numerous and held in high esteem – presented rich collections of animals or fossils. This allowed us to see and understand not only the richness but also the results of a work of observing, collecting and comparing, oriented towards a general view and carried through with sincerity and persistence, which is so different from today's Jurassic-Park-like or biosphere-restricted presentations.

The same is true for history. Because if we can see, for example, archaeological collections from ancient Egypt or from Doura Europos, an ancient Greek and later Roman city state in Syria, nowadays as destroyed as the collections of the Baghdad museums or the antique heritage of Hatra on the directive or on the leashes of the US, we see real stone or painted testimonies, witnessing against an all-embracing influence of the major but later religions. It is only by this visual experience that we can start asking for the reason why in history, hundreds or thousands of years ago, tolerance was high in many places like in some Hellenistic or Silk Road city states or during periods such as the Renaissance or the 19<sup>th</sup> century, whilst at other times, e.g. under Carolingian or Byzantine or the most abominable Habsburgian rule or largely and increasingly nowadays, religion and foolishness prevailed.

An answer to this question is the elimination of economically independent citizens and, consequently, civil rights in Late Antiquity when people were strangled by an endlessly tightened tax screw in order to destroy the basis of their independent economical life and paying an inflated military and bureaucratic apparatus. That is why religion was weak and knowledge widespread among citizens of the Roman Republic, whereas the contrary

prevailed in the oppressive, largely de-alphabetised empire of Late Antiquity. It was this enforced transformation of formerly independent citizens into large masses of helots and serfs, which made people lose their knowledge, their erudition, their capacity of reason and finally their dignity. Just as nowadays when people are taxed and taxed, and taxed again, rushed endlessly and put under more and more pressure, in order to bring about the secretly desired helotism of the masses.

For this reason, intelligence or general knowledge get lost, together with hope and thus democracy, literally meaning the peoples' self-government and nothing less. Against this pre-designed helotism, only sensual and intellectual experience of nature and history oriented towards a general view of the matter may help, and this and not mingling with government representatives is the task of uncrippled atheists. The best way to achieve this is by joining up with others who have the same intention.

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