

An Open Letter Concerning the Massacres of the Military Dictatorship in Egypt and its Willful Enforcers Among the Civilian Population

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To the esteemed opponents of the military dictatorship,
to the many who are uninformed, and to the supporters of el-Sisi, et al:

I'm not writing these lines because I am an Egyptian, or because I am a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. I am not. I am an American citizen who was born in Frankfurt, the grandson of an American soldier who was willing to sacrifice his life in World War II for a better world and who fought in Germany against the Nazis. I make my living as a social worker – an occupation that has been described as a *human rights profession*.

What has Egypt to do with us here in Germany?

In the year 2012, 1.2 million Germans spent their holidays in Egypt.¹ In the year 2010, 6.5% of all goods imported into Egypt came from Germany, placing Germany in third place of all countries exporting to Egypt. In addition, 4.9% of all goods exported from Egypt went to Germany in the year 2008, securing Germany seventh place in this category.² Tea from the organic shops, textiles from the drugstore chains, and an abundance of consumer goods for everyday life in Germany often come from Egypt.³

In this way there has been a certain traditional connection between the German and the Egyptian people.

The Preamble to the German Constitution (*Grundgesetz für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland*) begins with the words:

“Conscious of their responsibility before God and man,
inspired by the determination to promote world peace as an
equal partner in a united Europe, the German people, in the
exercise of their constituent power, have adopted this Basic
Law.”

The German Basic Law, which all Germans have to abide by and which is often quoted in debates about integration, thus describes the German people as bearing a responsibility

¹ Die Zeit vom 15. August 2013: Ägypten. Toter bei Ausschreitungen im Badeort Hurghada, <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2013-08/aegypten-toter-badeort-urlaub> (accessed: 17.08.2013)

² Barzel, S.: Ägypten, <http://www.afrika-auf-einen-blick.de/aegypten/export.php> (accessed: 17.08.2013)

³ Cf.

http://www.dm.de/de_homepage/alana_textil_home/alana_textil_ueberdiemarke/11790/die_sekem_farm.html and <http://www.alnatura.de/de/sekem> (accessed:17.08.2013)

before God and man to promote world peace. Let us now look at the occurrences that are happening in Egypt.

What happened before, and what is happening now in Egypt?

One can hardly describe it more poignantly than did Frau Gerlach in the Frankfurter Rundschau in an article published on August 14, 2013:

“With the dismissal of President Morsi, the army leadership, under the command of secretary of Defense, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, did not give Egypt a second chance for a democratic new beginning, but it obviously intends to help the former, authoritarian forces of the old regime back into power. The brutal removal of the protest camps, as well as the arbitrary persecution of members of the Muslim Brotherhood, suggest that. But also the attacks on churches and police stations are strongly reminiscent of a dark chapter of the Mubarak era: back then, paid gangs of thugs of the Ministry of the Interior used to attack police stations. Agents of the State were behind several attacks on churches. Now the Regime is spreading fear in order to present itself as a stronghold against the chaos. The rulers want to stigmatize the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists in order to legitimize acts of violence against them.”⁴

Ulrike Putz describes “... an atmosphere of a pogrom.”⁵ There are also willing enforcers among the civil population who are participating in the massacres.⁶ Inhabitants of the area near and around the stormed Fath-Mosque attacked Morsi followers with sticks and iron bars. In other parts of Cairo, civilians have been attacking Muslim supporters -- sometimes just because they happened to wear a beard.⁷

Seemingly, forces of the old regime are seeking to get back into power. It is a regime in which torture was an everyday occurrence, as Amnesty International stated:

“For 30 years, police and secret service under the leadership of President Mubarak systematically tortured and abused people. Most of the time they did that in order to extract ‘confessions’, but also to intimidate and humiliate their victims. Among these victims were children and women. The torture methods included beatings, electroshocks, hanging persons up by their wrists and ankles,

⁴ Gerlach, J.: Kommentar zu Ägypten, Handschrift des alten Regimes, Frankfurter Rundschau vom 14. August 2013, <http://www.fr-online.de/aegypten-syrien-revolution/kommentar-zu-aegypten-handschrift-des-alten-regimes,7151782,24013638.html> (accessed: 15.08.2013)

⁵ Putz, U.: Polizeigewalt in Ägypten: Tödlicher Freund und Helfer, Spiegel Online vom 17.08.2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/polizei-in-aegypten-wird-fuer-ihren-kampf-gegen-muslimbrueder-bejubelt-a-917083.html> (accessed: 17.08.2013)

⁶ Focus Online vom 17.08.2013: Online Regierung: „Führen Krieg gegen Extremismus“ – Anwohner attackieren Muslimbrüder, http://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/krise-in-der-arabischen-welt/aegypten/tid-32941/live-ticker-zur-lage-in-aegypten-maschinengewehrfeuer-und-leichen-auf-den-strassen-kairo-gleicht-einem-schlachtfeld_aid_1071761.html (accessed: 17.08.2013)

⁷ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung vom 18.08.2013: Islamisten rufen zu neuen Protestmärschen in Ägypten auf, http://www.focus.de/politik/ausland/krise-in-der-arabischen-welt/aegypten/tid-32941/live-ticker-zur-lage-in-aegypten-maschinengewehrfeuer-und-leichen-auf-den-strassen-kairo-gleicht-einem-schlachtfeld_aid_1071761.html (accessed: 22.08.2013)

sleep deprivation, threatening to kill him or her, and sexual abuse. In most cases the ones responsible remained free of any charges. Accusations of torture treatment made by political prisoners would not be followed up and did not lead to prosecution of the suspects. There existed a climate of lawlessness.”⁸

Forces inside the old regime who were leading the state security apparatus with brutality and keeping files on almost every activist⁹ are now back again and doing more damage.

In this sense we are talking here about the same kinds of mischief that the German population had to overcome themselves, and has pledged never to repeat or support anywhere else.

Unfortunately, the political leadership in Germany has been working together closely with Egypt for many years. Chancellor Merkel said on the occasion of the visit of Hosni Mubarak in Berlin in 2010 that between the BRD and Egypt, there have been traditionally very close ties and a mutual friendship, and that there is cooperation between the two countries in many areas.¹⁰

This chapter of the mutual cooperation between the different German governments of recent times and the Mubarak regime deserves closer and critical attention in the overall social debate.

A blood-stained part of this history is without a doubt the weapons delivery by the German Government to the Mubarak regime during the last ten years of its existence. Arms exports worth approximately 270 million euros were delivered by Germany to the despot, including armored vehicles and troop transport vehicles, as well as 1,726 automatic pistols and 606 assault weapons. In the year 2009 alone, the value of the weapons exported to Egypt was 70 million euros. In the beginning of 2011, water cannons of the German Brand MAN were being used against peaceful demonstrators.¹¹

Forces of the same old regime came back into power through a military coup. Now they imprison, kill and terrorize anybody who is insisting on the lawfulness of the presidency of the first democratically elected president of Egypt. Is it really surprising to us Germans that the agents of the former Mubarak regime are trying to regain influence (or have never quite lost their influence)? In Germany it took decades before the culture, the press, the economy, the justice system and politics were really freed of the influence of National Socialism; state agents of the former National Socialist regime within the new BRD were able to make careers for themselves for years after the breakdown of the Nazi regime.

⁸ Amnesty International. Sektion der Bundesrepublik Deutschland e.V., http://action.amnesty.de/o/8614/t/0/blastContent.jsp?email_blast_KEY=6040 (accessed: 17.08.2013)

⁹ Aljazeera: Egypt PM appoints new key ministers, vom 06.03.2011, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2011/03/2011365436227288.html> (accessed: 22.08.2013)

¹⁰ Angela Merkel begrüßt am 4.3.2010 ihren alten Spezi Hosni Mubarak, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HswBTblmd3o> (accessed: 18.08.2013)

¹¹ Fraktion DIE LINKE: Deutsche Waffen für arabische Diktatoren, vom 04.04.2011, <http://www.linksfraktion.de/im-wortlaut/deutsche-waffen-arabische-diktatoren/> (accessed: 18.08.2013)

To gain a correct understanding of the current situation it is important for us to look at the positions the current rulers in Egypt held in the former government of Hosni Mubarak. Can they, for instance, be precisely judged as either the main culprits, or partly responsible (activists, militarists or beneficiaries), as the less responsible, as “only” hangers-on, or as having been innocent?¹²

Let us for a brief moment imagine the situation of a member of the German Bundestag, who is only answerable to his or her conscience, and try, putting ourselves in his or her place, to put the following two rulers of Egypt into one of the above five categories:

Adly Mahmoud Mansour, since July 1, 2013 head of the Supreme Constitutional Court of Egypt, and Interim President of Egypt since July 3, 2013. He had been appointed to the Supreme Court, and later made Deputy Supreme Court Justice, by Hosni Mubarak in 1992.

Abdel Fattah el-Sisi rose under Mubarak to the rank of head of the military secret police, and then to be a member of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces. Sisi defended the military action in 2011 when numerous women were being arrested and threatened with prosecution for prostitution. The women were forced to endure body checks by male guards and military doctors who checked their hymens. Sisi defended this by stating that it was a necessary procedure in order to protect the military from accusations of rape!¹³

Who is responsible for the bloodshed?

At this point I acknowledge that among the peaceful protesters there were some who used violence, especially after they witnessed the brutality displayed by the army, the police and the mob in the streets. But that is not the point here. Rather, it is important to clarify who chose to escalate the situation and acted accordingly. There can be only one opinion about this, independent of whether one is after the fact supportive of this violence, as many Egyptians obviously seem to be by now.

The fact is that a few days before the violence escalated, the opposing parties were close to a peace agreement, which had been negotiated by the USA, the European countries and the Gulf States. The then-Vice President, Mohamed ElBaradei, was not able to persuade the head of the military, el-Sisi, to agree to this peace agreement.¹⁴

¹² The five categories of the Kontrollratsgesetzes Nr. 104 for the liberation of National Socialism and militarism from 5th March 1946, compare: Gesetz Nr. 104 zur Befreiung von Nationalsozialismus und Militarismus vom 5. März 1946, in: <http://www.verfassungen.de/de/bw/wuertt-b-befreiungsgesetz46.htm> (18.08.2013)

¹³ Armeechef Sisi im Porträt. Der Mann, der Mursi absetzte, vom 04.07.2013, <http://www.tagesschau.de/ausland/portraet-sisi100.html> (accessed: 18.08.2013)

¹⁴ Gearan, A. und Lynch, C.: U.S., allies were near a deal for peaceful end to Egypt crisis, Washington Post vom 17. August 2013, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-allies-were-near-a-deal-for-peaceful-end-to-egypt-crisis/2013/08/16/6e2ab46e-0686-11e3-88d6-d5795fab4637_story.html (accessed: 18.08.2013)

Comments and consequences:

Claudia Roth, the Chairwoman of the Green Party in Germany (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), said: “The uncontrolled violence of the army and the security forces in Egypt against the Morsi supporters is worrying us a lot and shocks us.”¹⁵

Rolf Mützenich, foreign affairs spokesman of the SPD Bundestag faction, said: “All European governments should, in a united action, call in the Egyptian Ambassador and protest in a unified manner.”¹⁶

Christine Buchholz, a Left Party member of the Bundestag, declared on August 14th: “The army and the police have yesterday conducted a massacre in Egypt. I condemn the violent behavior against the demonstrators...the declaration of a state of emergency is an attempt by the army to make the revolution into a putsch that is being controlled and conducted by the army.”¹⁷

The Egyptian Vice President ElBaradei declared, when resigning from office:

“It has become difficult for me to continue bearing responsibility for decisions that I do not agree with and whose consequences I fear. I cannot bear the responsibility for one drop of blood.”¹⁸

Denmark has declared its intention to block its economic and humanitarian aid for Egypt,¹⁹ and Norway has nullified all licenses for military exports to Egypt.²⁰

Ruprecht Polenz (CDU), Head of the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the Bundestag, suggested considering a temporary hiatus in Germany’s economic and financial cooperation with Egypt. He said that the question that presents itself is whether there were parts of the cooperation with Cairo that could be suspended temporarily in order to

¹⁵ Starke, S.: Roth von Gewalteskalation in Ägypten schockiert, Balaton Zeitung vom 14.08.2013, <http://www.balaton-zeitung.info/politik/roth-von-gewalteskalation-in-aegypten-schockiert-7564/> (accessed: 19.08.2013)

¹⁶ Handelsblatt-Online vom 15.08.2013, <http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/international/aegypten-eu-ruft-zur-maessigung-auf/8643712-3.html> (accessed: 22.08.2013)

¹⁷ Starke, S.: Linke: Armee und Polizei haben Massaker in Ägypten verübt, Balaton Zeitung vom 14.08.2013, <http://www.balaton-zeitung.info/politik/roth-von-gewalteskalation-in-aegypten-schockiert-7564/> (accessed: 19.08.2013)

¹⁸ Fleishman, J., Egypt's VP Mohamed ElBaradei resigns in protest against crackdown, Los Angeles Times vom 14.08.2013 <http://www.latimes.com/news/world/worldnow/la-fg-wn-egypt-mohamed-elbaradei-resigns-20130814,0,5082837.story> (accessed: 22.08.2013)

¹⁹ Gerlach, J., Ägypten, ein Scherbenhaufen, Frankfurter Rundschau vom 15. August 2013, <http://www.fr-online.de/aegypten-syrien-revolution/gewalt-in-aegypten-aegypten--ein-scherbenhaufen,7151782,24023346.html> (accessed: 19.08.2013).

²⁰ Spiegel-Online vom 16.08.2013: Reisewarnung: US-Regierung fordert Bürger zum Verlassen Ägyptens auf, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/us-regierung-fordert-buerger-zum-verlassen-aegyptens-auf-a-916865.html> (accessed: 19.08.2013)

‘send a signal.’²¹ On July 27, 2013, he stated his concern about the Egyptian military not wanting to establish a liberal secular democracy, but rather a state order that would secure their (the military’s) own interests.²²

Guido Westerwelle, German Secretary of State, said on August 14th:

“I emphatically condemn yesterday’s violence that was used (in Egypt) in order to clear the squares in the cities.”²³

Nicolas Maduro, the President of Venezuela, has re-called his ambassador to Egypt as a sign of protest against the stripping of power of President Morsi and against the use of violence, and is continually calling for the reinstatement of Morsi as President.²⁴

Appeal to the press and to journalists:

We are living in the age of real-time journalism, the era of Facebook, Twitter and Google. Furthermore, Al Jazeera is streaming non-stop live footage via the internet since the television broadcaster Al Jazeera Egypt has been shut down by the Egyptian military.²⁵

Given this background, one shirks one’s responsibility and becomes an accomplice of the violent military and its supporters if one fails to hear and weigh the information that is coming from the activists in the protest camps as well as the media, and instead lets oneself be exclusively guided by “official” sources, especially those sources controlled by the military.

In this context the question arises: How can one quote the information disseminated by the military with respect to the actual numbers of dead people, while at the same time ignoring completely the numbers given out by the well-organized field hospitals in the protest camps?

On Saturday, the August 17, 2013, The German Press Agency (DPA) was reporting about 600 dead,²⁶ but I talked to Abdurrahman bin Bas, someone who has been giving medical

²¹ Tagesspiegel vom 15.08.2013: Zusammenarbeit mit Kairo auf Prüfstand, http://www.welt.de/newsticker/dpa_nt/infoline_nt/thema_nt/article119052572/Zusammenarbeit-mit-Kairo-auf-Pruefstand.html (accessed: 19.08.2013)

²² Die Welt vom 27.07.13, http://www.welt.de/newsticker/dpa_nt/infoline_nt/sport_nt/nachrichtenueberblick_nt/article118438377/dpa-Nachrichtenueberblick-Politik.html (accessed: 20.08.2013)

²³ Die Sueddeutsche vom 15.08.2013: Unruhen - Ägypten: Westerwelle bestellt ägyptischen Botschafter ein, <http://newsticker.sueddeutsche.de/list/id/1482832> (accessed: 19.08.2013)

²⁴ Die Zeit vom 16.08.2013: Venezuela zieht Botschafter aus Kairo ab, <http://www.zeit.de/news/2013-08/16/deutschland-venezuela-zieht-botschafter-aus-kairo-ab-16234604> (accessed: 19.08.2013)

²⁵ Siehe: <http://mubasher-misr.aljazeera.net/livestream/>

Die englische Seite Al- Jazeeras: <http://www.aljazeera.com/>

²⁶ Frankfurter Rundschau vom 17.08.2013: Moschee in Kairo belagert, <http://www.fr-online.de/aegypten-syrien-revolution/machtkampf-in-aegypten-moschee-in-kairo-belagert,7151782,24037040.html> (accessed: 19.08.2013)

assistance in the protest camps for humanitarian reasons, who told me that as of 2:15 p.m. on the 15th of August, more than 2,600 dead had been counted. This number has been challenged in other texts as being information supplied by the Muslim Brotherhood -- even though the protest camps include people from various backgrounds -- but at least it has been mentioned.²⁷

The Ministry of Health is reporting 600 dead, while only counting the bodies that have been brought to the government-run hospitals and morgues; the numerous bodies in the Mosques and in other places near the destroyed camps are not included in their statistics.²⁸ The fact that not all relatives of a deceased person will go to either a hospital or a morgue has to do with the refusal of officials in these places to sign a death certificate without the relatives subscribing to a statement declaring that their relative has committed suicide.²⁹

There has been almost no mention in the media, to give another example, that in these protest camps there are not only Muslims, but Christians and secular people, as well as ordinary citizens who came together and were active in the process. The motto of the camp is: 'Protect the revolution, protect the legitimacy [of the Morsi presidency]'.

The overarching motive of the protesting people is their belief in democracy. When legally elected governments can easily be overthrown by a military putsch, elections become meaningless. Can we imagine in "our countries" in the Western Hemisphere that the military could force the will of the people onto governments? And that they would afterwards turn around and brand protestors as terrorists and suppress protest in the same manner as has now happened in Egypt?

On YouTube, there is a clip of a speech given by Ramy Jan,³⁰ a journalist and founding member of the Sahafiyuun ma'a Asch-Schar'iyah ("Journalists Supporting the Legitimacy [of President Morsi]), as he is being applauded by the audience on Rabaa-Square when he states that he is himself a Christian; or the speech given by the Christian woman Nivin Malaak³¹ on the same square, that has by now gained widespread significance. One wonders why these expressive testimonies are held back from us by the local media.

Who will still try to claim, after seeing such footage, that the group of the protesters only consists of Muslims?

²⁷ Lübecker Nachrichten vom 15.08.2013: Ausgangssperre bringt vorerst Ruhe - Muslimbrüder: 2600 Tote, <http://www.ln-online.de/Nachrichten/Brennpunkte/Ausgangssperre-bringt-vorerst-Ruhe-Muslimbrueder-2600-Tote> (accessed: 19.08.2013)

²⁸ Sailer, M.: Wenig Trauer bei Nicht-Islamisten, vom 15.08.2013, <http://www.dw.de/wenig-trauer-bei-nicht-islamisten/a-17024031> (accessed: 19.08.2013)

²⁹ Putz, U., Polizeigewalt in Ägypten: Massaker an Muslimbrüdern: Sie wollen Würde und den Totenschein, Spiegel Online vom 15.08.2013, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/unruhen-in-aegypten-tote-mursi-anhaenger-koennen-nicht-beerdigt-werden-a-916816.html> (accessed: 19.08.2013)

³⁰ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBLIM37qL6o> (accessed: 22.08.2013)

³¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZNAElnaumY> (accessed: 22.08.2013)

The internet is providing a great deal of material showing examples of the cruelty of members of the military and of their willing supporters among the civilian population. How shall we describe those who still maintain that the violence was started by the “Muslim Brotherhood” and that the bloodshed is mainly their responsibility? One can, for example, see a video on YouTube that shows a protester on Rabia square shot by a sniper.³²

One can also see footage of thugs in civilian clothing, armed with machetes (even though whether they belong to the military, the police or the secret service cannot be determined with certainty), as they are beating up civilians and are afterwards seen talking to security personnel.³³

Violent arrests by the police have also been documented on videotape.³⁴

The Egyptian army is shooting at unarmed people, and this occurrence has happened thousands of times and can be easily verified by watching some of the videos.³⁵

To all Christian citizens and their institutions:

Concerning the attacks that Christians in Egypt have had to endure, journalists will pick up only very little of the available information, and almost never repeat it or quote it again in subsequent articles. Why is this so? What is to be gained by simply ignoring facts, or opinions, or by concealing them?

On Wednesday August 14th alone, more than 60 attacks on Christian institutions were reported in Egypt.³⁶ These attacks were claimed to have been executed by Muslim groups, but we should take a closer look at these claims.

Alanbaa Makaariyuus, a Coptic priest, commented in a telephone interview that all the places that had been attacked had been left completely unguarded by the security forces, that the security forces did not show up once they were called, and that they continue not to protect the Christian institutions.³⁷

There are three possibilities for this kind of behavior by the security forces, and each of them points to the military regime:

³² http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qmu4ALmKGCY&feature=c4-overview&list=UUfwJgXqIoi4KU2CaoVh5_SQ (accessed: 22.08.2013)

³³ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDQA6qSdAac&feature=c4-overview&list=UUfwJgXqIoi4KU2CaoVh5_SQ (accessed: 22.08.2013)

³⁴ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDamnd8Lczg&list=UUfwJgXqIoi4KU2CaoVh5_SQ (accessed: 22.08.2013)

³⁵ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qInWG8Abaxk&feature=c4-overview&list=UUfwJgXqIoi4KU2CaoVh5_SQ (accessed: 22.08.2013)

³⁶ Gerlach, J., Ägypten, ein Scherbenhaufen, Frankfurter Rundschau vom 15. August 2013, <http://www.fr-online.de/aegypten-syrien-revolution/gewalt-in-aegypten-aegypten--ein-scherbenhaufen,7151782,24023346.html> (accessed: 19.08.2013).

³⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRioMVTtT1M> (accessed: 22.08.2013)

1. The first possibility is that these attacks were organized and conducted by the military itself, as had been the case often during the Mubarak era, which has been documented in the beginning of this article.

In some videos, Egyptian citizens are heard giving testimony that members of the security forces and the military have been encouraging citizens to launch attacks on churches.³⁸

2. A second possibility is that the military has left the usually heavily secured institutions deliberately without any protection against Islamist extremists, in a similar way that civilians are allowed to abuse protestors.
3. The third possibility is that the thugs and the looters are not Islamists at all, but the criminal gangs known as “Baltajiyah” who are acting autonomously; the security forces do not hinder them because the chaos that they create legitimizes the military regime and its violence.

The conclusion that the attacks on Christian institutions have been the work of thugs and looters is that of the Coptic priest Ayuub Yuusuf, who is in charge of a Christian parish in Iminja. He, along with Alanbaa Makaariyuus, accuses the “security forces” of not providing any protection whatsoever to the churches against the violators even after being specifically asked to do so.³⁹

Referring to a statement issued by the Bishop of the Protestant Church in Germany (EKD)⁴⁰, under the title “Solidarity Is With The Victims,” I want to emphasize that there can be no solidarity with the victims without simultaneously holding the wrongdoers to account. Unfortunately, this is exactly what has not happened, and this has to be criticized openly, because regardless of how much of the share of the blame may fall onto the Muslim Brotherhood, the main responsibility for the bloodshed must clearly be borne by the military regime. The above-quoted statements of German politicians, as well as the resignation of ElBaradei, should have given the Protestant Church in Germany enough grounds to assign responsibility for the violence – even if it is just partial responsibility, while at the same time condemning the Muslim Brotherhood -- to the military regime.

Worse than the statement issued by the German Protestant Church (EKD) is the position of the Catholic Bishops Conference in Egypt, as presented by their press secretary, Rafic Greiche. In this statement the victims are made into the predators. At least in the announcement by the EKD there was no blaming of any particular party, or if there was it

³⁸ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN1JfAqQ5B4> (accessed: 22.08.2013)

³⁹ Aljazeera: البلطجية أحرقوا كنائس المنيا: قس مصري، vom 17.08.2013, <http://www.aljazeera.net/mob/f6451603-4dff-4ca1-9c10-122741d17432/e30a92d2-5b78-4b76-9399-fd958f984932> (accessed: 19.08.2013)

⁴⁰ http://www.ekd.de/presse/pm133_2013_Auslandsbischof_zu_Aegypten.html (accessed: 22.08.2013)

was in a very indirect way -- between the lines, so to speak. Greiche, on the other hand, defended the state of emergency that the Egyptian Interim Government had declared.⁴¹

Ibrahim Isaac, the Coptic Catholic Patriarch of Alexandria and President of the Council of Catholic Patriarchs and Bishops in Egypt, was able to outdo himself in sucking up to the tyranny by assuring the military of his full support in all of their actions:

“We support consciously and voluntarily all state institutions in the country. Especially named shall be here the Egyptian police forces and the army, who are defending our country at great risk and with great effort.”⁴²

Neither the Protestant Church nor the Catholic Church in Germany has managed to accuse the Egyptian military of even “disproportional” behavior? That is the least that can be asked of any human being with common sense and a heart!

Furthermore, the Protestant and Catholic Churches in Germany should enter into a critical dialogue with their sisters and brothers in the Coptic Church concerning their support of the Mubarak regime.

Perhaps the following words of a Christian might wake up the representatives of the Christian faith:

“Whoever is rejecting the liberation theology is also rejecting Jesus Christ, because any theology is either liberating or it is not a theology.... The structures of sin that are being created by some privileged, on the backs of the life and the suffering of the impoverished majority, lead to the capital in the world growing, but being concentrated in the hands of the very few.”⁴³

Why then support Mubarak, if he has obviously been a despot?

The words of Oscar Romero, delivered during his final sermon on March 23, 1980 in the Cathedral of San Salvador, seem to speak directly to and condemn the actions of the military regime in Egypt:

“No soldier is forced to obey an order that is violating God’s law. Nobody is subjugated by an amoral law. The time has come that you are rediscovering your conscience, and hold it higher than the orders of the sin. The church, the defender of the heavenly laws, and of God’s justice, the dignity of the human being and of the person, cannot be silent in the face of these atrocities. We are demanding the

⁴¹ Katholischen Kirche in Deutschland: Der Westen in der Pflicht, vom 15.08.2013, http://www.katholisch.de/de/katholisch/themen/politik/130815_aegypten_christen_vorwuerfe.php (accessed: 19.08.2013)

⁴² missio - Internationales Katholisches Missionswerk e.V.: Erklärung der Katholischen Kirche in Ägypten, vom 19. August 2013, <http://missio-blog.de/blog/2013/08/19/erklarung-der-katholischen-kirche-in-aegypten/> (accessed: 19.08.2013)

⁴³ Luiz Carlos Eccel, seit 1998 Bischof von Caçador im brasilianischen Bundesstaat Santa Catarina im Jahre 2007, in: Arntz, N: Papst Benedikt attackiert einmal mehr die Befreiungstheologie, vom 19.12. 2009, <http://www.itpol.de/?p=346> (accessed: 20.08.2013)

government to recognize the uselessness of reforms that are growing on/nourished by the blood of the people. In the name of God, and in the name of this suffering people, whose lamentations are rising up to heaven louder every day, I commend you, I ask you, I order you in the name of God: End the repression!”⁴⁴

In addition it seems that the churches, the media, and the politicians have been giving the Coptic Church a pass concerning a clear positioning to distance themselves from anti-Zionism or anti-Semitism. Crucial questions are not being asked, such as whether they acknowledge the State of Israel’s right to exist, which is especially interesting given the background of the Muslim Brotherhood having been accused by Germany and other Western powers – whether or not those accusations are true – of anti-Zionism and/or anti-Semitism. All the while the Coptic Church could be accused of the same.⁴⁵

At this point, after a Muslim has seemingly pointed the finger at Christians -- even if I intend to write this as one human being to other human beings on the basis of shared, mutual values -- it is very important to clean up, so to speak, in front of one’s own house, or rather what is perceived in the outside world as “one’s own house.”

The King of Saudi Arabia and his rather less-than-royal words

The King of Saudi Arabia could in fact be the cosigner of the statement issued by the Coptic Catholic Patriarch of Alexandria, Ibrahim Isaac, since he is judging the actions of the military in Egypt as a fight against terrorism, without offering any criticism. Since Western governments such as the United States, as well as the European Union, are planning to cut Egypt off from their financial support, Saudi Arabia has announced its support of Egypt and its intention to plug the financial gap created by the cessation of Western aid.⁴⁶

Has the King of Saudi Arabia ever thought of the possibility of experiencing a putsch in his own country, and of having to defend himself against it? Consistent with his current statements, the putsch forces in Saudi Arabia would have the same right to take action against him and in the same manner as the military in Egypt is doing right now. He would have been better advised to heed the 56 Scholars in his own country who expressed these opinions, among others, in the following statement⁴⁷:

⁴⁴ Veit Schäfer, V.: 30 Jahre Christliche Initiative Romero, http://www.alt-katholisch.de/fileadmin/red_ak/CH-Archiv/arc_11/11_3_4.htm (accessed: 22.08.2013)

⁴⁵ Spiegel Online vom 22.11.1971: Kopten. Umbrandeter Fels, <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-43144634.html> (accessed: 22.08.2013)

⁴⁶ Spiegel Online vom 19.08.2013: Ersatz für westliche Entwicklungshilfe: Saudi-Arabien stellt Ägyptens Regime Blankoscheck aus, <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/entwicklungshilfe-saudi-arabien-bietet-aegypten-geld-an-a-917414.html> (accessed: 20.08.2013)

⁴⁷ Cf. Aljazeera vom 08.08.2013: بيان العلماء السعوديين حول أحداث مصر, <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/pages/21f77113-6847-48a5-9d59-9ca704bdc1e2> (accessed: 22.08.2013)

- The military putsch went against an elected Government and thus constitutes an action which is prohibited before Allah. Each and everyone has to distance himself from the putschists and their actions, in order not to be sentenced by the following:

“Help each other to kindness and fear of God, but do not help each other to sin and hostile behavior, and fear Allah! Allah is strict in his punishment.” (5:2)
- All that has been built up by the military on the grounds of this putsch is nullified.
- The military is manipulating the media.
- The time of the Morsi government was replete with acts of sabotage and manipulation against the newly-elected government; for instance, the intentionally low supply of basic goods and electricity.
- The scholars express their horror and their refusal to accept the military regime, as has also been expressed by some countries.
- The military putsch is aimed against Islam as such.
- The military will be held accountable for the brutality with which the protest camps have been eradicated, and for the murders that were committed in the wake of those events.
- This statement by the scholars is not a defense of the Muslim Brotherhood, but only a defense of truth and of the oppressed ones.
- To be silent about the military atrocities and their enablers constitutes treason against the people in their attempt to strive for freedom and dignity.
- It is necessary to reinstall Morsi to the presidency.

Dialogue is something that asks a lot from us. It demands that we first get to the bottom of an issue before we react, otherwise we will speak just from our gut. It demands that we listen attentively and openly to the person in front of us and are able to hear criticism without denying it, just because it might be coming from someone who holds a different world view from ours.

These pages have been written in order to invite this dialogue, and in respectful anticipation of your feedback.

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