



"MR. BAAB, YOU WON'T GET ANY BEER HERE!"

Posted on August 1, 2023 by Patrik Baab



Journalist Patrik Baab was fired from Christian Albrechts University (CAU) in Kiel for pursuing freedom of the press. Because of his investigations in the Donbas—the Russian controlled part of Ukraine—he was denounced as Putin's poll watcher in a press campaign and kicked out as a lecturer of practical journalism at Kiel university. This example of cancel culture and censorship has caused a worldwide sensation. Patrik Baab took legal action against this. Meanwhile, heHe won the court case against the termination. The judges ruled that the university may not prohibit a journalist from doing his job. In the meantime, the judgment has been legally binding. What happens now?

Roberto De Lapuente is in conversation with Patrik Baab.



Roberto De Lapuente (RDL): Mr. Baab, Kiel University has not objected to the ruling of April 25, which was in your favor. This means that the ruling is legally binding, and you have been proven right. So, we'll see you back in Kiel soon?

Patrik Baab (PB): Well, that's not up to me. The CAU awards teaching assignments from semester to semester. In my case, it was a subject supplement on "Practical Journalism." The students learned tools to research topics methodically and correctly and to implement them for television. In 20 years, there has not been a single complaint. As my website shows, I have a little experience in this field. Now we have to see if CAU will swallow its pride and offer me a teaching position again. As far as I am concerned, I will continue to be available. After all, it's not about vanity, but about education—especially in times of war, when the truth is clouded by all parties involved, and when methods of research and ideology criticism should be taught.

"Sad state of the German higher education system"

RDL: The ruling also strengthened the freedom of the press, you could say. Do you personally have the impression that such is the case? Or will universities funded by the public continue to try whatever they can to get rid of troublesome colleagues?

PB: In fact, in my view, the Schleswig-Holstein Administrative Court has strengthened freedom of the

press. But more than that—in a difficult climate, in which state propaganda narratives permeate the entire public and politics is done by way of resentment, the chamber, chaired by Dr. Malte Sievers, has demonstrated judicial independence. This is a good sign for the separation of powers in German democracy. This signal is particularly significant at a time when other courts sometimes give the impression that the lies of the warmongers enjoy legal protection. With this ruling, the Chamber has also strengthened the Freedom Democratic Basic Order (*Freiheitlich-demokratische Grundordnung*, FdGO, which means the core elements of the democratic order in Germany)) as a whole. This is because, according to supreme court rulings, the legality of administration is also an integral part of the FdGO. This means that administrative action must be carried out in accordance with the rule of law, and that no one can be arbitrarily thrown out the door without due process. In its 1956 ruling on the KPD (German Communist Party), the Federal Constitutional Court distinguished the FDBO from any form of National Socialist or Stalinist arbitrary rule, particularly in its remarks on the lawfulness of administration. Against this background, too, the Schleswig-Holstein Administrative Court made legal history with its ruling.

RDL: And what impact do you think that has?

PB: Other journalists and university lecturers who do not always want to follow the prevailing opinion can refer to this ruling. According to a study by professors Dr. Heike Egner and Dr. Anke Uhlenwinkel, 47 full professors alone were dismissed at German, Austrian and Swiss universities from 2020 to April 2023 without reasons codified in criminal or service law, i.e., by circumventing constitutional procedures. Prof. Dr. Ulrike Guérot was not even warned by the University of Bonn. In not a single case was the presumption of innocence applied. The study only refers to full professors; lecturers and research assistants were not counted. We can therefore assume an even much larger number of unreported cases. This demonstrates the sad state of the German university system. Now the Administrative Court of Schleswig-Holstein has made it clear: universities must not act as truth-tellers or opinion monitors.

"Mr. Baab, leave the premises immediately!"

RDL: Are we looking at a re-feudalization of higher education?

PB: The universities have returned to the year 1837, the time of the so-called "Göttingen Seven." At that time, seven professors were dismissed at the University of Göttingen because they demonstrated against the abolition of the liberal constitution introduced in the Kingdom of Hanover in 1833. Today, the

universities have partially reverted to the educational ideal before the Enlightenment. "The critical method suspends judgment in the hope of arriving at it," the philosopher Immanuel Kant wrote. Today, universities have returned to judgment—to the affirmation of existing power relations. This is a serious regression, back into the mindset of the Counter-Enlightenment.

RDL: In the mainstream media, we have read about your trip to eastern Ukraine. The fact that you won the trial, that it is now even legally binding—not a peep. What will the public remember about Patrik Baab as a person?

PB: The German public is divided. The following incidents show this: On Good Friday 2023, I wanted to visit the restaurant *Palenke* in Kiel with a friend and his daughter. I was greeted by the words of a server, a young man who also studies at the University of Kiel: "Mr. Baab, you are a conspiracy theorist. You won't get any beer here. Leave the pub immediately!" On the street, we recalled: "That must have been how it was in 1933." This young man is also active at the campus radio of the CAU, where he spreads identitarian thinking and ideas of contact guilt. He thus contributes to a new anti-democratic dictatorship of the "kindly ones," as Jonathan Littell characterized it in his novel of the same name. This is indeed the state of the bourgeois public sphere today—it is no longer democratic, no longer inclusive, but degenerating into a public sphere of censorship and denunciation. The majority of the press has not only completely compromised itself by parroting state war propaganda, but has also demonstrated its semi-literacy. This will come back to haunt these organizations: Many users are already turning away in horror.

"Those who need money, do not play the hero"

RDL: Maybe just a stupid pub experience?

PB: No, the incident also demonstrates that anti-democratic thinking does not originate in circles of the intellectually disadvantaged. It is cultivated in academic circles. This was already the case in the Weimar Republic. Antidemocratic, authoritarian and racist thinking was propagated in the circles around Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger, Oswald Spengler, Hans Zehrer, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Ernst Jünger, Arnold Bronnen and others. The studies of Kurt Sontheimer and Karl Dietrich Bracher have shown this impressively. In journalism, anti-democratic and racist ideas were brought among the people, not only by the National Socialist newspapers, *Völkischer Beobachter* or *Der Stürmer*, but also by the editors of the right-wing conservative press empire of Alfred Hugenberg. The destruction of

democracy is preceded by the destruction of the democratic public. The intellectuals—or what is left of them, the academics—are the driving forces. Mostly, these people themselves do not realize how deeply they are entangled in the propaganda system: "It is hard to convince a man of anything when his salary depends on his not understanding it," Upton Sinclair wrote in 1934.

RDL: How can this development be explained, Mr. Baab?

PB: Through the liberalization of universities, the reduction of mid-level faculty, the temporary contracts, the cutbacks in funding and the compulsion to acquire third-party funding from government agencies or companies. All of this, together with the monetarization of science, simultaneously ensures covert censorship—those who need money do not play the hero. One bows to power. Characteristic of these academics is blind submission to state authorities, a self-synchronization in which, according to Karl Dietrich Bracher, Byzantinism, manipulation and coercion are inextricably intertwined.

RDL: What else sticks with you after this dismal experience with your university?

PB: On the plus side, my research earned me a lot of respect from the defenders of the Republic. At a protest event in Kiel, organized by the CAU students' working group for the protection of fundamental rights, more than 100 people were in the hall, and there was a standing ovation. My name is now known throughout the English-speaking world, from Australia and Canada to the legendary reporter John Pilger in the USA. My reportage about the war and the pre-war in Ukraine, *On Both Sides of the Front*, will be published in early autumn. The calendar for September and October is already full with readings and discussions. I have requests for translations into English and Swedish. This means that a counter-public is forming against the warmongers and the destroyers of reason. From Ukraine, from Russia, from the USA, from Canada and Australia, from Switzerland and Austria, critical spirits are coming forward who do not want to watch how an incompetent and mendacious generation of politicians is leading this world into an inferno. They ask the question posed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*: "Why do people fight for their servitude as if it were about their salvation?"

"Media does not describe reality; but the relationship of journalists to reality"

RDL: That sounds hopeful. However, you are now talking about the journalist Patrik Baab—but what about the human being Patrik Baab?

PB: What remains of me: a pile of dust. Many old colleagues say: He took a wrong turn at some point. They don't realize that anticipatory obedience has long since become part of their personality, like a brain implant. Yet they are the ones who have long since arrived in the post-factual age. They gawk at the computer and don't realize—media is a filter that looks like a window. They live in the illusory world of propaganda. Media does not describe reality; but the relationship of journalists to reality. This is Kant: "The objects must be according to our cognition"—so nothing new. But this does not mean renouncing the reality test on the spot. Kant also says: Perception must be "afflicted" by the observation of the world.

RDL: How would you like to be remembered after this episode?

PB: I wish I were posthumously counted among the resistant, among those who said, No, in front of the power elites. Because there are enough conformists. But we can't know that. Jean-Paul Sartre once said: The author writes a score. But the reader performs it. In any case, I have staked my life on research in three wars (the Balkans, Afghanistan and Ukraine). That's what distinguishes me from the "desk-jockey" editors. In the end, however, I will perish—like a face in the sand on the seashore.

This interview comes through the kind courtesy of [*Overton Magazin*](#).

