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Can we still call an anti-Semite an anti-Semite in Germany?

by Jutta Ditfurth

(author, sociologist, public intellectual, Frankfurt/Main, Germany)

Introduction

Since October 2014, new anti-Semitic, racist, and far-right movements in Germany have sprung up (calling themselves *Hogesa*, *Pegida*, etc). The former vocational school teacher and journalist Juergen Elsaesser is supporting them, using his magazine *Compact*, his new youtube channel *Compact TV*, his publishing houses (Compact and Kai Homilius-Verlag), books, blogs, and Facebook pages. He organizes expensive conferences that include right-wing ideologists from Russia and Europe. In the 1980s and '90s, Elsaesser was a communist and radical left-winger, but today he is active in the right-wing populist movements in western and eastern Europe. Indeed, he belongs to the particular faction that works closely together with anti-Semitic, nationalist, "eurasian" Russian ideologists (such as that of Aleksandr Dugin), and politicians surrounding President Putin, as well as with Russian state television (such as *Russia Today Deutsch*).

2014 saw the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany, with the birth of new organizational forms (*Montagsguerfront*, *Mahnwachen für den Frieden*, *Friedenswinter 2014/2015*, *Pegida* and more). I have been studying and writing about the history of anti-Semitism for many years, especially about modern, disguised anti-Semitism and the new "völkisch" movements. In 2014, I was invited to give readings at the Universities of Brandeis (Waltham, Mass./USA), Tel Aviv, Haifa and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem with my current book "The Baron, the Jews and the Nazis" ("Der Baron, die Juden und die Nazis") about the anti-Semitism of the German nobility from the Romantic era up to today,

Then, on April 16, 2014, I appeared on the TV program *Kulturzeit* ("Culture Time", Channel: 3sat [Germany/Austria/Switzerland]). I named the central organizations and ideologists, and called Mr Elsaesser a "..." (currently censored). He sued me. Elsaesser's defense attorney is Michael Hubertus von Sprenger, the former attorney of the well-known British Holocaust denier David Irving.

I lost the case in the first instance at the Munich I Regional Court on December 10, 2014, because the Bavarian court redefined anti-Semitism: Now, you are only an anti-Semite if you positively ally yourself with the Nazi regime of 1933 to 1945. With this definition, Germany would be freed of most of its anti-Semites at a single stroke. Not even people who openly identify as Nazis praise Hitler and the NSDAP, or openly deny the Holocaust. This would (still) be a punishable offense.

Now my freedom of speech has been curtailed, even though I produced ample evidence for my opinion. Should I repeat my words, I am threatened with a fine of EUR 250,000 or 6 months imprisonment.

I am asking for help:

1. I would be delighted to receive comments on the verdict and the case, and, with your permission, would gladly use them in whole or in part for public relations work related to the second instance.

2. For the first instance, I incurred costs of about EUR 25,000, but at the time of writing only a fraction of this has been covered by donations. The costs of the appeal are still to come. This is why I am asking urgently for donations:

PayPal: jutta.ditfurth@t-online.de

The bank account:

Account Holder: OekoLinX-Antirassistische Liste

RE: "Elsaesser-Prozess"

IBAN: DE40500100600717720600

BIC: PBNKDEFF

Bank: Postbank Frankfurt/Main

City/Country: Frankfurt/Main, Germany

To the case

In March 2014, members of the "new Right" founded the *Mahnwachen [für den Frieden]* ("Solemn Vigil [for peace]"). The ostensible cause was the conflict in Ukraine. Their central propositions were riddled with anti-Semitic stereotypes. *Montagsquerfront* ["Monday Third Position"] is carried on various streams of anti-Semitic, nationalist-"völkisch", conspiracy theorist, right-wing-esoteric, homophobic, and anti-feminist ideology. After the ten-month conflict, we now know: a new populist movement has arisen in Germany, reaching far into the notorious "middle of society". In terms of this political conflict, I called the newly right-wing Juergen Elsaesser a "..." [currently censored]. Now I am threatened with a EUR 250,000 fine or six months imprisonment. My speech is no longer free.

If you ask modern anti-Semites if they hate Jews, they will normally answer "no". Elsaesser is well aware that terms such as "international" or "Anglo-American financial oligarchy", "Zionists" or "American east coast" are used by today's anti-Semites as synonyms or codes for "the Jews": they are anti-Semitic stereotypes. In

2009, he reported on the members' magazine of IG Metall (2005), which opened with "the bloodsuckers" as its main theme. The front page image shows "an insect wearing a Stars-and-Stripes top hat and a long trunk approaching". Elsaesser ridiculed critics: "Nowhere did *IG Metall* mention Jews, and it also didn't use synonyms [!] for Jews such as Zionists or the American east coast." It can be shown that Elsaesser has had knowledge of the anti-Semitic codes since the 1990s.

For years, the structurally anti-Semitic, artificial distinction between the "evil, money grubbing, unproductive, Anglo-American, Jewish financial capital" and the supposedly "good, creative, productive, German industrial capital" has been a part of Elsaesser's repertoire. Putting the majority of the blame for the crisis in Capitalism on "Anglo-American international financial capital" is a classic anti-Semitic paradigm, an archetype of anti-Semitic ideology since the 19th century.

In his speech at the so-called *Friedensdemo* ("Demonstration for Peace") of the *Mahnwachen* on April 21, 2014 in Berlin, Elsaesser adopted the absurd Occupy cliché of "1 Vs 99 percent". Elsaesser: "1 percent of the "international finance oligarchy" is strangling and choking "the 99 percent, who include workers, the unemployed, destitutes and also many companies and firms [!] in their interest rate noose." And for those whom "international finance oligarchy" is too "abstract", he named names:

Messrs Rockefeller, Rothschild, Soros, Chodorkowski, and the monarchies of England and Saudi Arabia. And why should it be anti-Semitic to say how this tiny little slice of the money-aristocracy abuses the Federal Reserve in order to plunge the entire world into chaos?

Four of those named may have Jewish ancestors, and he used two of the names simply as decoration: legions of Christian exploiters are "missing". 1 Vs 99, so beloved of modern anti-Semites, ignores every half-intelligent analysis of social levels and classes, but this is not really about a critique of capitalism.

Reading Elsaessers speeches and writings of the last six years throws up a delusional ideological system that doesn't just make most Jews out to be "Zionists", but also, only thinly disguised, equates Israel with the Nazi regime, thus relativizing the Holocaust. At the Germany-wide peace demonstration organized by the Montagsguerfront on July 7, 2014 in Berlin, he said:

My name is Juergen Elsaesser and my target audience will continue to be "das Volk" [...] Those who are not allowed to talk about Zionism must also be silent about fascism.

He misused the title of Viktor Klemperer's masterpiece *A Philologist's Notebook* ("LTI – Notizbuch eines Philologen" where LTI stands for *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, "The Language of the Third Reich") for his neologism "*Lingua Quarti Imperii*, the language of the Anglo-American Empire", which it claimed to analyze, and he added:

Our *popular initiative* is effecting a break with Political Correctness, and we are organizing resistance against international financial capital and its warmongers in Washington, London and Jerusalem.

However, those whose interests he is really representing is revealed (for example) in a speech given in Switzerland in July 2014:

'Anglo-American financial capital' basically operates like "a three-shell con game," while "sensible, socially active" German "entrepreneurs" add "real value". According to Elsaesser, "German heavy industry" was indeed somehow bound up with the Nazi regime, having "supplied the weapons for the Second World War", in order to conquer "some sort of [...] raw materials in the East" [!] which is why it has a bad reputation, but today "the whole German German engineering sector is [...] very peaceful.

In order to maintain this muddled view, Elsaesser had to fail to mention that Germany is the third largest exporter of arms in the world. Elsaesser also has no problem with the social, ecological, economic and military consequences of his much-praised "very good [German] business relations [...] with Russia and China" and "good business relations" with the Arabic states and Iran. He is completely on side with the business interests of his associates. According to Elsaesser, "the Russians", "the Chinese", and "the Persians" pay with "real money", in contrast to "the Americans". **Elsaesser, who loves to style himself as a radical "Critic of the System", is, on closer inspection, merely a populist lobbyist for middle-class German capital.**

Elsaesser appeared again and again with anti-Semites at demonstrations. One of them is Ken Jebsen, a former radio presenter at Radio-Brandenburg-Berlin (RBB), with whom he worked closely. (Ken Jebsen is a pseudonym, his real name is Moustafa Kashefi.) Both supported the *Mahnwachen* and gave interviews to each other. Jebsen, alias Ken FM, is well known for a flood of anti-Semitic statements. For example, he wrote:

Why is the following anti-Semitic? National Zionists have occupied Israel just like the Nazis occupied Germany in '33.

It's not just this statement that seeks to relativize the Holocaust. In a letter to a radio listener before RBB fired him, Jebsen wrote:

I know who invented the holocaust as a PR stunt. the nephew of freud. bernays. he wrote about how to run such a campaign in his book propaganda. goebbels read that and implemented it.
[Original writing style retained]

Jebsen loves to compare Israel with the Nazi regime.

A further Elsaesser collaborator for many months was Lars Mährholz, one of the founders of the so-called *Mahnwachen*. In an interview with *Voice of Russia* on April 7, 2014 he said:

What is the reason behind all the wars in the history of the last 100 years? And what is the cause of all of them? And if you just look closer and separate out the parts a bit, you can see that in the end, the American Federal Reserve, the American central bank, which is a private bank, that they have been pulling all the strings on this planet for more than a hundred years.

According to that view, it was not Nazi Germany that murdered 6 million Jewish

people and caused the Second World War, it was an [apparently private, apparently Jewish] US-American bank. This is the infamous encoding of the anti-Semitic myth of the Jewish global conspiracy: The Jews are themselves the murderers of the Jews – and as well as this, they are to blame for the Second World War and indeed "all" of the other evils of the last 100 years.

As Jebesen and Mährholz were criticized for their anti-Semitic statements, Elsaesser publicly guaranteed them both his "emphatic solidarity".

Elsaesser was one of the ideologues and leaders of the *Mahnwachen*. One – often incorrectly quoted – study from the Technical University of Berlin reveals:

- 91 percent of the participants in the Berlin *Mahnwachen* at least partly believed that "America and the American military [...] are only the truncheon of the FED (US central bank)" (entirely believe: 21.1 %; mostly believe: 30.5 %; partly believe: 39.4 %).
- 47 percent partly or completely hold it possible that "the Zionists manipulate the levers of power".
- a majority, want "one leader" ("Führer") at least temporarily.

Elsaesser accepted invitations from Holocaust deniers.

For example, at a conference in Moscow (2009) he listened to the talk of the Holocaust denier Israel Shamir, who believes that the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is real and he has several ties to the European neo-Nazi scene. Also advertised was Tomislav Sunić, who is close to the French New Right of Alain de Benoist, co-author of a commemorative volume for the well-known Holocaust denier David Irving. Other conference participants represented the "Eurasianism Movement" of the Greater-Russia nationalist, Aleksandr Dugin (see below). In his own speech, Elsaesser called for:

A mutual platform for resistance from the Christian and Islamic worlds, because the Anglo-Americans [sic] want to set Christians and Muslims against each other [...] a mutual resistance front in Europe [...] to replace the European Union with a confederation of sovereign nation states reaching from Bordeaux to Vladivostok. That is, a Eurasian Union.

2009/2012: Elsaesser welcomed the re-election of the Iranian president Ahmadinejad and was proudly photographed both in the audience of and shaking hands with the Holocaust denier. He only had derision for the tortured Iranian opposition.

2014 Switzerland: Elsaesser pursued an invitation from the well-known Swiss Holocaust denier Ivo Sasek and his AZK (Coalition Against Censorship), and made a speech. The Swiss newspaper *Tagesanzeiger* wrote the following about Sasek's presentation (Switzerland):

For Sasek, America is the devil and is wreaking orchestrated havoc, as is written in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. The mysterious text from the beginning of the last century is supposed to contain the concept of how Jewish politicians and bankers are secretly striving to create a world government.

Sasek had famously already invited Holocaust deniers to his conferences before this.

Elsaesser works with anti-Semites and offers them a forum in his media.

In 2008, he associated with the Kai Homilius Verlag from which several authors had distanced themselves, because just one year previously it had placed an advertisement in the New Right weekly newspaper *Junge Freiheit* (JF) ("Young Freedom") and published several books by the JF author Jan von Flocken. From 2009, Kai Homilius also distributed *Compact* films, partly in cooperation with the conspiracy theorist and right-wing-esoteric orientated online film company *secret.tv* and their significant contributor Michael Vogt. Connections lead from him to right-wing extremist projects in other European countries. For a short time, the boss of *secret.tv* was Jan Udo Holey (pseudonym Jan van Helsing), a well-known extreme right-winger and anti-Semitic conspiracy theorist whose book *Secret Societies and their Power in the 20th Century* ("*Geheimgesellschaften und ihre Macht im 20. Jahrhundert*") was banned in 1996 for sedition/hate speech. In Helsing's inflammatory writing, we again find some of the same anti-Semitic stereotypes that, in 2014, turned up in the New-Right peace movement.

In 2009, Elsaesser worked with the right-wing extremist Kopp publishing house.

Since 2010 in his magazine *Compact*, Elsaesser has published anti-Semitic, right-wing-populist, and conspiracy theorist positions. The co-publisher of *Compact* is Andreas Abu Bakr Rieger, a former Catholic who converted to Islam. He is the publisher of the *Islamic Newspaper* for which Elsaesser has also already written. Until 2007, Rieger was the vice chairman of the Islamic Council, the dialogue partner of the German Federal Government at the Conference on Islam. Rieger had to resign as it came out that he said the following in 1993 or 1994 at a meeting of Islamist Turks in Cologne:

Just like the Turks, we Germans too have historically often fought on the side of good, although I have to admit that my forebears were not completely thorough with our common enemy. But the young Germans of today have no goals anymore.

Under pressure, he later tried to apologize.

Elsaesser worked with the famous Nazi, Karl-Heinz Hoffmann, who spent years in jail. Hoffmann was the director of the *Wargame Group Hoffmann [Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann]*, banned in 1980 by the Secretary of the Interior. Members of the *Wargame Group* are responsible for the murder of Jewish Germans and for the Oktoberfest terror attack in Munich in 1980, among other crimes. The terror attack was the worst in Germany since 1945, with 13 people killed and 211 injured, 68 of them seriously. Elsaesser has produced a *Compact* movie in which he moderates a discussion between the Nazi Hoffmann and the Swiss conspiracy theorist Daniele Ganser. Here, Elsaesser gives Hoffmann the chance to make excuses for his acts (March 2014).

Elsaesser belongs to a "völkisch", anti-Semitic, racist, homophobic, and anti-feminist network.

In 2009, he founded the "*Volks*"-Initiative against Finance Capital, a populist affiliation against "Anglo-American finance capital". The NPD ("National-Democratic Party of Germany") vice chairman Holger Apfel welcomed the new organization: With his demands, Elsaesser did not just "approach" NPD positions, "No, he represents NPD

positions." The NPD is the federal German party that comes closest to the NSDAP in terms of its policies.

2010: A conference of Elsaesser's "'Volks'-Initiative", played host to right-wing populists such as Nigel Farage (UKIP, Great Britain) and Karl Albrecht Schachtschneider. In the same year in Vienna, Elsaesser gave a presentation at the invitation of the radical right-wing *Initiative Heimat & Umwelt* (IHU) ("Homeland and Environment Initiative"), who, in their newspaper *Wegwarte* ("Lookout Point") fulminated "against the alleged 'liberation' of Germany and Austria in 1945."

Elsaesser supports the political party *Alternative für Deutschland* (AfD) ("Alternative for Germany"), who have since won seats in several German regional parliaments and in the European parliament. In October 2014, Elsaesser welcomed the march of the Nazi hooligans in Cologne (HogeSa):

It is a great step forwards that the hooligans don't just mainly bash each other's heads, but instead want to do something for their country together.

Elsaesser wants a German People's Front with a "Eurasian Option" that will oust the "Anglo-American finance aristocracy from Europe" and create a "Eurasian Alliance" at the side of the present Russian government. When "Jewish-American capital" is driven out of Europe and the German national community is once again "pure", then the common axis of right-wing extremists and Greater-Russia nationalists, whose company Elsaesser has sought for years ...

In 2009 he appeared in Berlin's *Russian House of Science and Culture* saying:

Democracy holds sway here, freedom of speech reigns, here you can say that which is necessary.

Opposition Russian leftists, democrats and journalists surely see things differently. Almost as a thank-you for the flattery, Elsaesser was invited to Moscow to the above-mentioned conference, proudly announcing on his blog that he would argue for "the opening of a Eurasian perspective, in the form of a Paris-Berlin-Moscow axis."

This "Eurasian Option" has for a long time been pushed by the Russian right-wing extremist and influential sociologist Aleksandr Dugin, leader of the Eurasian movement, whose articles Elsaesser has published and whom he interviewed for his magazine *Compact*. *Zeit Online* writes:

In the nineties, Dugin was notorious for his affirmative positions on the Waffen-SS, for ambivalent statements on German National Bolshevism, the 'Third Reich', and fascism in general. Once, Dugin praised the original architect of the Holocaust and second in command to Himmler Reinhard Heydrich as a 'convinced Eurasianist'. [...] Half a year before his interview with Elsaesser's *Compact* and in front of running cameras, Dugin suggested conquering Europe and annexing it as a Russian protectorate. [...] Dugin's years of networking, not only in the Russian nationalist spectrum, but also in the European New Right now reaches across the radical fringe of pan-European anti-Americanism.

2013: In November 2013, Elsaesser and his magazine *Compact* organized a conference on homophobia in Leipzig, to which, alongside other right-wing populist speakers, the Russian Duma representatives Olga Batalina and Jelena Misulina were invited. They are among the architects of the notorious law 'against homosexual propaganda'. Béatrice Bourges also gave a speech. She is a dogmatic Catholic, who in 2013 in France mobilized a million-person protest against homosexual marriage.

2014 "Al Quds day": On this day, Muslims around the world demonstrate for the destruction of Israel and the 'liberation of Jerusalem'. A co-organizer in Berlin for the last seven years is Juergen Grassmann, who "[belongs] to the same scene as the journalist and conspiracy theorist Juergen Elsaesser. In the last few months, Grassmann took part in the so-called "Monday demonstrations" in Berlin where Elsaesser regularly appears." (*Spiegel Online*)

When a modern ... [censored] and nationalist is unable to analyze political and economic conditions and has to mask his real interests, then he enthusiastically resorts to conspiracy theory madness. As every modern ... [censored], Juergen Elsaesser is anti-American, which has absolutely nothing to do with necessary left-wing criticism of the politics of the US government or the military-industrial complex in the USA. For example, in a 2013 presentation in Switzerland, Elsaesser said:

Now they [the USA; JD] are arming Al Qaida, who in a couple of years will then blow up some American skyscrapers, with the help of the CIA of course.

Elsaesser is a racist, condemning not only the Roma. At a soccer game in 2012 (the German team defeated the Swedish team) he stirred up hatred:

How can you be 4:0 up and not bring the game home? That would have been impossible in Germany in former times. Perhaps that happens in Africa, where you can have a kick around just for the joy of it. [...] each to his own. No people ['Volk'] is worse than any other. But it is absolutely DEADLY to mix them.

After the decision of the German Constitutional Court in favor of a basic right for homosexuals to adopt, Juergen Elsaesser went ballistic:

Not only will the "institution of marriage (...) be destroyed" and with it "the foundation for the reproduction of the 'Volk'". He also feared a "different way of life", which would threaten "human co-existence". This has nothing to do with "extra-terrestrials". **The "motor" of the attack is "a tiny, global finance oligarchy, who want to use new reproduction and genetic technologies to erect their thousand-year Reich."**

This is nothing more than a modern variation on the classic anti-Semitic theme of warning against evil, foreign "Others".

[Note: This is just a short extract from a longer dossier that I would like to make public one day. For reasons of cost (translation) I have left the footnotes and sources out here. J.D.]

The Munich Regional Court

With her terrible definition of anti-Semitism, the judge in the Munich I Regional Court (on 8.10.2014) has freed Germany of the vast majority of its anti-Semites with a single blow:

a fervent anti-Semite is someone in Germany who talks, with conviction, in an anti-Semitic way and, with conviction, does not condemn the Third Reich and cannot view the period 1933-1945 as separate from the background of history.

According to this logic, it would be forbidden to call someone anti-Semitic when they use anti-Semitic insults against other people, discriminate against them or pursue them with hate. A person would only be considered anti-Semitic if they affirmatively identified themselves with the years 1933 to 1945, with Nazi fascism, and Auschwitz. Jewish people could in future readily be accused of making a "global conspiracy". Anti-Semitic rubbish like *the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* could be found in school libraries.

In its verdict of July 28, 2014, the German Constitutional Court, contrary to the Munich I Regional Court, clearly defended freedom of speech against permanent restriction [in another case] through putting too much weight on slander:

The German Constitutional Court has defined the term "slander" narrowly as understood in law, due to its limiting effect on freedom of speech. It follows that an exaggerated or offensive criticism does not make a statement a slander, taken as it stands. Rather, the focus in the statement must not be the conflict in question, but the actual defamation of the person. Beyond this, the statement must also consist of polemical and exaggerated criticism aimed at personal degradation. An essential feature of slander is to force the actual case in point completely into the background through personal insult. Only then in the sense of a legal presumption is it possible in exceptional circumstances to dispense with weighing up the balance of rights, taking into consideration all the circumstances of the individual case. For this reason, slander will only be possible in questions of fundamental public interest in exceptional cases, and moreover, these will mostly remain confined to a so-called private feud.

[BVerfG, 1 BvR 482/13 of 07.28.2014, Paragraph 11,
http://www.bverfg.de/entscheidungen/rk20140728_1bvr048213.html]

The conflict over the new anti-Semitic, racist, and nationalist movements, over AfD, Mahnwachen, Querfronten, Hogesa and Pediga, are – who can deny it? – "questions of fundamental public interest" (German Constitutional Court). However, the judge in Munich clearly took Elsaesser's side.

One of the court's arguments was that, especially in Germany given "German history", the accusation of anti-Semitism could be damaging to business. Indeed, I have a right to freedom of speech, but there are restrictions when Elsaesser's professional (business) interests could be damaged. This is what he claimed. What's really happening is that Elsaesser is using the legal conflict to make himself known to right-wing extremists around the world. In contrast to the caring assumption of the court, Elsaesser proudly announced that, for example, the circulation of his magazine

Compact rose from 30,000 (beginning of 2014) to 42,000 (September 2014) during the conflict over the *Montagsguerfront*, and that his recent *Compact* conference was a financial success, drawing more than 800 participants each paying between EUR 69 and EUR 350 for one day.

But freedom of expression must not be incarcerated by business interests. It must be possible to call a ... [censored] a ... [censored].

References:

(1) The verdict in english:

<http://www.jutta-ditfurth.de/dl/dl.pdfa?download=Munich-District-Court-I-VERDICT-201412.pdf>

(2) The only English-language newspaper article so far:

The Jerusalem Post, Oct 17, 2014, Benjamin Weinthal: "Anti-Semitism was limited to Nazi period, judge says"

<http://www.jpost.com/landedpages/printarticle.aspx?id=379057>

(3) A Synopsis of my book in english:

<http://www.jutta-ditfurth.de/Baron-Juden-Nazis/Baron-Juden-Nazis.htm#Synopsis-english>

(4) These News as PDF:

<http://www.jutta-ditfurth.de/dl/dl.pdfa?download=are-anti-Semites-stil-anti-Semites-in-Germany-20150219.pdf>

Translator: **Thomas Williamson**

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[#Dugin](#) [#shoah](#) [#holocaust](#) [#Meinungsfreiheit](#) [#freedomofopinion](#) [#Maehrholz](#)
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