

7. The human right for truth or: how can we force DaimlerChrysler, Exxon_Mobil, Mossad & Co. to tell the truth?

Since 1999, I have been investigating the history of Mercedes Benz Argentina (MBA):

1. The fourteen MBA union factory workers, disappeared during the military dictatorship in Argentina,
2. The stolen babies from the torture camps (in the family of MBA-manager, JR Tasselkraut, there are three children with falsified certificates of birth, registered as his own children),
3. The laundering of nazi gold through MBA from 1951 on and
4. The pact of Standard Oil with the Nazis and the presumed kidnapping of Adolf Eichmann by Mossad.

I filed requests for information in several countries. I researched in the archives of Daimler Chrysler in Stuttgart and in Austin (Texas), where the documents of Standard Oil are kept. Still, there are many questions without answers.

The Freedom of Information laws do not really work. They have too many exceptions (national security etc.), often the requests are not answered (Mossad), and CIA offers access to the documents for money, instead of declassifying the files. And in many countries such laws do not even exist.

In addition, the just mentioned laws only concern government institutions, not private companies. Especially the multinational corporations are allowed to be silent or even to lie. Daimler Chrysler claimed in several shareholders meetings not to have any information about William Mosetti, who for fifteen years served as its Executive Director in Argentina. In their corporate archives (obviously previously "cleaned"), I found only one memorandum of the Board of directors, with the date of the 1 September of 1939 (beginning of World War II): On the problem of whether Daimler-Benz would have to participate in a car race in South Africa. Exxon Mobil communicated to me that it did not know its ex-employees Mosetti nor Eichmann, and in its archives in Austin, where I asked for the pact of Standard Oil with the Nazis, I was given some articles on Chinese oil lamps.

This manipulation of the truth is cynical and perverse. We are talking about crimes against humanity. But often corporate conduct like this is accepted as "normal", as the common "culture" of all companies. Those who continue to ask questions are portrayed as "strange" and "obsessive." And today, in the U.S., with the stroke of a secret pen, labeled "enemy combatant" and easily silenced.

Why are we, who have spent years working on this subject, still demanding the truth? We could spend our productive time in far less frustrating way's. We are calling for the truth, because it is a basic requirement for defending the Constitutional rights of any individual against various forms of repression by government institutions and the limitless avarice of corporations.

I have tried to obtain information through the courts. But what court today would dare to investigate the secret pact of Standard Oil with the Nazis? Already in 1942, the legal investigations of the Department of Justice failed, due to the power of the corporation.

I presented the case of the disappeared workers in the "truth court" in La Plata (Argentina). They publicly interrogated the victims, the witnesses and the presumed authors of the crimes. This was important, because in addition I was able to gather the filmic material for my documentary. But the "truth court" does not have its own investigators and it cannot impose penalties. The military and their civilian accomplices appeared in front of the judges and they pretended not to remember anything and they claimed that nothing had happened

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Two criminal charges were brought, one in Germany against the MBA-manager, J.R. Tasselkraut, for murder, and in Buenos Aires against DaimlerChrysler for illegal association. After four years of investigation, the public prosecutor of Nuremberg closed the case with the argument that it was not proven that the disappeared were really executed and that they may reappear one day. The public prosecutor in Buenos Aires did not interrogate the directors of DaimlerChrysler, as the lawyer for the victims had asked, but he questioned instead representatives of the Union Council!

I brought an additional criminal charge against Tasselkraut for the illegal appropriation of three children who were most likely born in torture camps and I produced the falsified birth certificates. In Argentina, appropriation of children constitutes a crime without a statute of limitations. But apparently nothing is being investigated. As I am not a direct victim (I am not a relative), I am denied access to the file and the possibility of requesting evidence.

In the civil lawsuit against Daimler Chrysler which the relatives of the disappeared initiated in the District Court of San Francisco, German authorities (The District Court in Karlsruhe) refused to serve the company headquarters, in Stuttgart, with papers, arguing that the case threatened the national security of the Federal Republic of Germany. In spite of this, the Court in San Francisco refused to hear the case, in the first round, arguing that it would be better to bring it to the courts in Germany or Argentina...

The legal system does not fulfill its duty to establish the truth. And often governments participate in the concealment of pertinent facts. That the administration of George W. Bush behaves this way comes as no surprise.. But that the Frente Amplio (the left wing broad front) of Uruguay acts in the same way, is deeply disappointing. For sure, all of us who celebrated its victory in the elections in October of 2004 in the streets of Montevideo, did not expect miracles. Perhaps one must tolerate injustices sometimes and make compromises because a refusal to do so would have far worse consequences. Perhaps it is preferable to service the external debt, because an international boycott could be serious. But one thing we really hoped for: We hoped that the Frente Amplio would stop the lying. We wanted them to speak openly about the reasons behind certain developments in order to create awareness and the right conditions to fight against injustice. However, they continue with the old policy of Realpolitik and the daily obligations of the state apparatus. Values such as truth and justice are in short supply, even when one talks about such horrors as the Holocaust.

The media could claim its right to access to the truth. But it too has failed. In addition, some media czars (Berlusconi, Cisneros, Murdoch et.al.) are not satisfied with their economic power, they also seek political power.

But does the media not inform about violations of human rights and are there not books and filmscripts written on Eichmann nowadays? Yes, but they for the most part avoid touching upon or harming the economic interests of the mayor players; or questioning the version of the perceived powerful Mossad. Who dares, after wars and civil wars, to follow the money trail?

The entire world is becoming closer, more and more global; but the media becomes more and more provincial, more cowardly and more trite toward truth. Today, the media has as much to do with the truth as prostitution with love. The television brings entertainment (of low quality), and the newspapers asphyxiate us every day with an enormity of events without proper background history.

E-mail chains and alternative news agencies flourish on the Internet - proof of an unsatisfied hunger for the truth. The problem: Almost nobody wants to pay for that service, the work is based almost wholly on exploitation of it's own labor force: The chronic lack of money makes professional investigation difficult and the eternal search for funding could make for new dependencies.

In Germany, a debate is currently under way which focuses on the right of citizen to information. The basic question is if all households must pay fees to the public radio and television stations, regardless whether they own a television or only a computer with which to receive programming. This discussion on the fundamental right for more complete information makes sense, but it would have to include the new alternative media that informs infinitely more than the television with its operas, talk shows and "entertainment" format news programs.

Often, it seems that people only worry about their immediate (mostly economic) necessities and leave history in the hands of the historians (who have their own economic necessities). There are just a few moments of glory when citizens seized their inherent right to the truth: In 1917, with the confiscation of the archives of the czarist secret service, Ochrana, and in 1990, with the occupation of Stasi headquarters, the security agency of the ex-GDR (German Democratic Republic).

This impression is superficial. Even the international juristic bodies -like the Human Rights Commission of the United Nations (resolution 2005/66) - ask for "the right to know the truth ". In December 2006, the General Assembly voted in favor of the U.N. Convention on Enforced Disappearance. Argentina and France promoted this initiative. Germany, however, made restrictions. Article 24 of the Convention grants to the victims the "right to know the truth ", defining as "victim" each individual who may have suffered direct damage as a result of enforced disappearance". Already now the international legal community is waking up to understand that not only relatives fall into this category but also that society - all of the people who had to live under a regime where the method of enforced disappearance was pervasive and threatened all of society. A "legitimate interest" is granted to these people and their right to obtain the truth and justice through the truth.

The Convention is an important step. It must be ratified by the various states, they must determine the details about who can ask its right for access to the truth and how, to what court, in what framework and with what exceptions.

Will the right for truth work in reality? So far, in the case of Mercedes Benz Argentina, the courts, the governments and the media - in Germany, Argentina and the U.S. - have put themselves clearly on the side of those who profited from the crimes or who committed the crimes.

Nevertheless: "Big Oil" and "Big Car" were defeated in the war for the mind. Of course, they can buy judges, experts and politicians, and they can trust also that the media is going to protect its advertisers. But anyone who, today, looks in the Internet, knows

- who is responsible for the disappearance of the 14 Mercedes workers,
- who stole the babies who were turned into orphans by the military,
- who laundered the Nazi money and redirected it back into the German economy of the post-war period and
 - who wanted to take the petroleum of Baku together with the Nazis. The cost of that War was fifty million dead. (

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How much does Big Oil calculate for their next war?