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in the New Millennium

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What is German – who should be allowed to become German?

An ethnographic field study on the distribution of national semantics and symbols in everyday life¹

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A political campaign as an ethnographic laboratory

The old nation state is supposed to lose its importance in a new Europe of regions (Münch 1995). However, in times of globalisation and migration one can observe (as a reaction to the ambiguities of mobile life) the revitalisation of national concepts of *Volk* and the idea of a culturally bound nation state which is imagined as a community held together by a common essential 'history' and 'destiny'. After reunification in Germany many contexts can be observed in which various national discourses play an important role – not only in the political debates and the mass media (see, e. g. Müller 2000) but also in everyday life.

In the spring of 1999 the new 'red-green' coalition in Germany attempted to transform the old citizenship laws (*Staatsbürgerschaftsgesetz*) dating back to the year 1913, which were still based on the idea of 'blood' (*ius sanguinis*), into a *ius soli* in order to facilitate assimilation and integration for immigrants and to catch up with other European nation states such as France. The aim of this reform was to take into account that cultural homogeneity, one backbone of German identity, cannot be kept up in a country with such high immigration rates as Germany. So Otto Schily, minister of the interior, and his staff presented to parliament the concept of a law which would allow foreigners to become German after having lived in Germany for at least 8 years (instead of 15 years as was the case at the time) and – what was then much criticised by political opponents – the foreigners (*die Ausländer*) should be allowed to keep their old passport in general so that they could keep up their old loyalties. Another frequent point of criticism was that children of foreigners born in Germany should get the German passport automatically regardless of having another passport from the state of their mother or father.

The CDU/CSU (non-ruling conservative party) immediately started a very successful public campaign to collect signatures against dual citizenship (*Doppelpaß*) in the streets and in public assemblies. (It should be mentioned that the plebiscite protest was initially started in the Bundesland Hessen just before the regional elections took place and that these elections were won by the Conservatives as a result of the successful campaign.) The campaign was soon taken over by almost all local branches of CDU/CSU, and *Doppelpaß* became

the most discussed topic in public and everyday life for weeks. Suddenly the debate was no longer concentrating on parliament or the political pages of the newspapers, but reached the arts section and the 'letters to the editor'. It reached ordinary people on their way to work or shopping where they could not avoid noticing the little red and white tables of the local conservative parties asking them to give their signature to what they called in a slogan 'Yes to integration – no to dual citizenship'. The conservatives argued that by spreading the *Doppelpaß* like water over flowers, integration would be hindered or delayed and not, as the left-wing parties believed, make progress.

Many 'ordinary' German-born people were involved in the highly emotional debates around the little street-tables organised by the CDU or in the opposing left-wing parties and groups which struggled to occupy central public sites and busy street corners with their competing information tables close to those of the CDU. In a kind of competition for public space and opinion various demonstrators stood up against 'racist' politics of the Conservatives. The debate was also reflected in jokes, satirical magazines, flyers, postcards and election posters and also in the 'Karneval' (famous traditional masquerades and parades taking place every year in many German regions for five days in winter). The debate was soon removed from rational legal problems concerning the reform of citizenship and from the pragmatic question of how to manage and facilitate integration. Very often one could suddenly read or observe irrational romantic nationalisms and ethnic constructions of identity which now seemed to be activated or legalised by the political campaign of the Conservatives and their supporters (Diez Poza 2000). Under the protection of a serious and large political party, which claims to represent the centre of society as a *Volkspartei*, it seemed to be no longer politically incorrect to say something against foreigners in public or to announce that being German is something 'very special', even something 'superior', something of a 'high value' to be protected against those 'foreigners' who were supposed to be criminal or chronically unemployed or not willing to share the same duties as the Germans (but to profit from the given social rights). Urban legends and stories about being the last 'Germans in the district', suppressed by aliens and foreign languages and strange customs, circulated among supporters of the campaign standing around CDU tables. They debated fiercely with the passers-by who blamed the CDU for 'being racist'. The newspapers contributed to this process of "othering" and exoticising by reporting on the 'poor' and 'homesick' and so far unintegrated 'foreigners' in 'our cities' who wear strange clothes and eat strange meals and – one very serious reason to blame them – very often would not regard the German passport as a very necessary aim worth giving up old loyalties for.²

Thus, this event turned out to be an ideal ethnographic laboratory to observe how traditional national self-images about 'being German' and stereotypes and beliefs about 'the strangers', especially about the 'Islamists' (*Islamisten*), became a topic of everyday discussion and of ritualised cultural performances. A rapid dissemination of different – also of new, post-modern – national semantics and symbols into a variety of contexts could be described by the means of participant observation and discourse analysis of newspaper articles. This was particularly true of 'letters to the editor' and special stories (as mentioned about under-

privileged foreigners striving to become German or not) reflecting crucial aspects of Germans' national consciousness.

The wide range of events at the beginning of 1999 reveals a characteristic spectrum of cultural forms and practices, of national symbols and anti-symbols, icons and counter-icons, for example: the woman with the headscarf symbolising the unintegrated traditional *Islamist* in newspapers³ was challenged by the culturally integrated modern and athletic Turkish-German businesswoman in the CDU's election posters.⁴

The symbolic practices which are now instrumentalised to transmit national or even post-national confessions and semantics derived from different traditions: for example demonstration culture (posters, pamphlets, flyers, the ritual of occupying a site or public place by competing groups dressed in a highly symbolic way). They also derived from forms of social protest developed by the citizens' civil rights movements and peace movements of the 70s and 80s. Examples which can be associated with these traditions include the tables with the signature lists themselves, the buttons shaped in the tradition of the former 'anti-nuclear power—no thank you' design, now reworded to declare 'yes to the dual citizenship' and worn, for example, by members of the Green party, or the so-called 'tolerance miles' which can be regarded as a successor of the so-called 'light-chains' or 'candle-chains' (*Lichterketten*) which were organised in the early 90s to oppose escalating hostility against foreigners in some German cities. And the symbolic practices were also borrowed from the context of pop culture and modern marketing, which all political parties used in their campaigns concerning *Doppelpaß*.

Thus, what actually occurred was a fight of symbols – around the little signature tables in the localities of everyday life and in the translocal mass media as well: for example there was a 'black-red-gold' national scarf, which clearly distinguished the member of the local CDU party collecting signatures from his opponent, the member of an anti-racist group showing the Palestinian scarf. And the CDU table offered a CD of the local representative of the *Bundestag* (German parliament) which had the *Deutschlandlied* (national anthem) as its first song. This representative's national-conservative attitude, which was also reflected on the cover of the CD showing the national colours, stood against the paper *Doppelpaß* of a member of PDS (left-wing party popular in East Germany) containing poems of Bertold Brecht – a symbolic gesture, with which the opponent of the CDU's campaign tried to convince those who were willing to support the CDU not to give their signature to this, as he said, 'racist' campaign.

Thus, the case study illustrates how national semantics and symbols are produced or reactivated and instrumentalised in order to gain political power on a local or even translocal, nation-wide level. It explores how cultural anthropology can contribute to a critical understanding of the processes of developing political culture in face of the challenges of redefining nation and national identity in the global world.

National semantics and symbols in diffusion

What this article proposes to do is to structure the collected field data by using a model of social diffusion (Gerndt 1990) in order to show on which levels these varying national semantics and symbols were being disseminated into everyday life, how they reached ordinary people and how they were reshaped and to which ends they were used.

National Semantics in social diffusion

The first level of this reconstructed diffusion process can be called the 'social diffusion' and lays emphasis on the question: Who was involved and engaged in this debate? Who are or were the actors?

In general, 'everybody' meaning ordinary people and not only the usual political elites, was called on to get involved in the debate and bring forward their arguments for or against the *Doppelpaß* and new law by this plebiscitary campaign. The politicians brought the debate to the street corners as shown above. But social diffusion also means that now representatives of those social groups got involved who had never uttered an opinion concerning national identity in public until then or had at least not been expected to give any 'official' comments on this topic before:

For example *young people*:

German and "foreign" young people suddenly designed whole youth magazines dealing exclusively with this topic.⁵ And, for example, in some cities they performed parodistic counter-campaigns to collect signatures against the local conservative parties. One group which could be observed one Saturday afternoon in the Bavarian city of Regensburg was collecting signatures for 'C.S.U.' A lot of people signed their lists not realising that it was a joke and that 'C.S.U.' stood provocatively for 'clowns collect signatures' (*Clowns sammeln Unterschriften*) and not for the Bavarian party CSU (Christian Social Party).⁶

Another example: The songs of a Berlin pop band 'The bad girls' (*Die bösen Mädchen*) consisting of German and Turkish girls dealt with the topic of dual citizenship and, in their case, especially of 'being in-between'. The CD which the girls produced themselves was sold during the *Karneval der Kulturen* (a popular local, annual multicultural parade).

Other social groups who suddenly interjected themselves into the discussion were the show stars and well-known athletes. The show master Thomas Gottschalk, the singer of *Deutschrock* Marius Müller-Westernhagen, and the tennis star and businessman Boris Becker – the latter two married to 'coloured' women, as the newspapers stressed in this context – sought to attract supporters for the government's reform project by means of their own advertising campaign printed in five big newspapers.⁷ As popular pop icons they represented a new form of nation state and a new type of the culturally tolerant and open-minded German, and they opposed to the traditional hetero-stereotype of the 'ugly German'. They invented or showed the new German as a 'world citizen' who embraces transnational relationships and contacts. Being proud of 'Germany as an open and modern Republic' as they claimed in the attached text, they gave this national phrase, which had become very problematic and almost

taboo in post-war Germany, a new positive meaning. When being proud of Germany is no longer a question restricted only to dull neo-nationalistic propaganda, but like in this example a serious matter of popular and smart 'national' heroes – then it becomes evident that this transformation and dissemination of national semantics can be interpreted as an attempt to disseminate the idea of Germany as a 'normal' nation state that deserves not only respect and acceptance but also patriotism and idols who stand up for its affairs.

The local diffusion of national semantics:

In what direction are national semantics moving?

The second level or dimension of the dissemination of national semantics in everyday life concerns 'social space'. In 1999 the topic of 'dual citizenship' spread within two or three months from the political pages of the newspapers to the local pages and the 'letters to the editor'. And this means that everyday life with its protagonists and opinions, confessions and local coping strategies – as demonstrations, utterances of violence, parodistic actions – were moved into the centre of public interest. To give some examples. The *Doppelpaß* issue was very soon picked up in the newspapers' gossip columns and was applied to any opportunity which seemed appropriate. The Berlin *Tagesspiegel*, for example, asked – reporting on Princess Caroline's wedding to Prince August of Hannover – if Caroline of Monaco would now also receive the *Doppelpaß*.⁸ And when Claudia Schiffer, the German princess of beauty and fashion, was once photographed 'very naturally' wearing only little makeup and a headscarf according to the latest fashion, the Berlin B. Z. (local yellow press) printed the picture with the attached comment: 'Claudia's contribution to dual citizenship'.⁹

The topic of the *Doppelpaß* – and linked to it some national rhetorics – shifted from the political stage to other, more popular social spaces in those weeks. First of all it moved into commercial pop culture.

A producer of German pop songs with German texts (*Schlager*), Ralph Siegel, emphasised in a TV magazine that he had a very special purpose when choosing a Turkish-German band called *Surpriz* as German representative at the 44th competition of the Grand Prix Eurovision in Jerusalem. The band with its song written in three languages should be regarded as an ambassador of a multicultural, open-minded Germany.¹⁰ In keeping with this image their producer helped to create for them, the young members of the band called themselves modern, integrated 'Germanturks' (*Deuschtürken*), and supported the reform of *Staatsbürgerschaftsrecht* very offensively. But when they explained why they were in favour of the *Doppelpaß* they had to face a lot of criticism for stressing that they – as representatives of the third generation of immigrants – still sought to maintain their cultural identity as Turks which they didn't consider a contradiction to having a German passport. The multicultural mix they wanted to stand for was also symbolised by their dress. Their cultural identity as Turks was shown, for example, by the folkloristic variation of the *Fez* and the Turkish language in their songs.

Thus, these examples show that not only in those weeks were the social spaces shifting and the contexts being extended in which national messages were becoming popular. Moreover, they also indicate that different and unrelat-

ed contexts were merging with one another – contexts which had spoiled all national aesthetics in Germany after national socialism and had been traditionally kept strictly separate up to the late 90s. The public debate reflected this change of how national topics were now represented in commercial entertainment in a more informal, even playful way.

'Pop meets politics' the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* wrote in connection with Gottschalk, Becker and Müller-Westernhagen supporting the government and representing its politics as 'three angels for Schily'.³⁷ With this ironic comment the newspaper gave these three stars, who served the German minister of the interior so eagerly, the aura of those well-remembered smart pop-queens of a cult TV series of the 70s ('Three Angels for Charly').

When national semantics are dealt with in pop culture and transformed into new shapes and symbols as, for example, the songs or the folkloristic outfit of pop bands like *Surpriz*, these modes of symbolic national representations remind one of (*Volks*)*Kultur* serving to establish the culturally homogeneous nation state of the 19th century. Nation-building seemed to be an aesthetic project having much more to do with sports and the singing of folksongs than with state politics (at least in the eyes and feelings of the people). And it should also be emphasised that the practice of employing the 'elites' for nation-building (like Becker, Gottschalk and Müller-Westernhagen or other artists) has a long tradition reaching back to the 19th century where it was also at first the intellectuals or bourgeoisie who made the idea of nation-building popular by the means of cultural and aesthetic practices. (see e. g. Kaschuba 1998) In the context of the reform of citizenship, pop stars like the famous, fair, blond 'folk heroes' Thomas Gottschalk and Boris Becker, who ought to occupy symbolically the world of lifestyle and also the *Mitte* ('centre of society') for the government, or the 'dark' Turkish-German boys and girls of *Surpriz* were evidently built up as national heroes of a new type. And the question arises: To what extent is pop culture now going to serve as a *new* national culture supporting another *new* nation?

The young members of *Surpriz* fulfilled their national task as ambassadors perfectly. In Jerusalem they performed a highly symbolic gesture, laying a wreath as an act of solidarity with recent German history, that is with its victims. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* commented on this event by asking in general about the foundations and conditions of German national identity. The author of one article, Edo Reents, ironically regarded it as a sign of mental Germanisation (*mentaler Einddeutschung*)¹² of the *Ausländer* when one member of the band confessed that he would, in a way, feel responsible for the Holocaust, the German national trauma (Giesen 2000). Normally the Turks who were not living in Germany in the 1940s would not have been expected to share responsibility for this period of German history.

But the author in the *SZ* was incorrect with his assumption. At a local assembly of CDU supporters in Berlin this very topic was heatedly discussed – the question of whether the *Ausländer* were ready to bear and share the duty and shame of German history should they become citizens. The traditional motif of the nation as a *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* (community bound together by destiny) was cynically instrumentalised to exclude and separate those who are not the

descendants of the German victimisers. Foreigners who are not bound to them by their 'blood' or ethnic origin were, on the one hand, expected to take responsibility and, on the other hand, were excluded from *Volksgemeinschaft* (ethnic community) by the insinuation that they would not be able or ready to bear the burden of history. As in the 19th century (and later), this argument followed the idea of an organic symbiosis of 'ethnos' and a common, shared history. In this argumentation only members of the ethnos are 'really' and 'authentically' able to identify themselves with this 'shared history'.

One could also point to a third dimension of diffusion and transformation of national semantics concerning the already mentioned symbolic practices. This dimension had to do with the question: *How* was this diffusion process transmitted or performed at the time of the CDU's campaign?

The folksongs, parodistic actions, demonstrations in the streets, jokes, cartoons and new or old images could be analysed as such cultural symbolic practices. But here I want to lay emphasis on a fourth issue.

Diffusion of old and new national rhetoric

Finally, this article wants to sum up some of the most popular old and new national semantics that circulated in those days (as well as before and later) in newspaper articles, politicians' speeches and ordinary people's comments when they faced the CDU tables and signature lists.¹³

First of all, 'Germanness' was essentialised and became a highly emotional topic. The following are some of the phrases heard: Citizenship was regarded as a special gift which should not be given as a present to everybody. In this argument exclusivity of citizenship is emphasised. People referred to the duties which were regarded as a premise for becoming a citizen of Germany. Citizenship was treated as a 'privilege', and one could detect fear of being disadvantaged when having only one (a German) passport. Germans with only one passport were afraid of becoming 'minor' or 'inferior' citizens. 'Second-class citizen' became a popular term. Another argument produced various metaphors: "You have to decide", "You can't be married to two women at the same time", "You can't serve two masters". Older theories about the typical German authoritarian character are worth mentioning here for in the last phrase citizenship is associated with *Untertanentum* (that is behaving as an inferior subject of the state which is respected as a master whom you have to obey uncritically).

German identity was, as mentioned above, seen in terms of *Schicksalsgemeinschaft*, as a community held together by a destiny from which its members cannot escape and which foreigners cannot really share.

In this context nation is constructed as an anthropological root metaphor which reaches back to an archaic origin. In these comments, stereotypes and phrases, nation actually meant the ethnic and cultural community, and often especially the Christian community.

After having been treated with ambivalence in post-war times German identity now appeared to have acquired a positive value: the phrase 'proud to be German' could be heard again in everyday speech. Terms like "real German" or 'German mentality' which, for example, an Italian, as one 'letter to the editor' argued, would never be able to feel or to adopt, to prove how emotional the

national discourses had become. A very romantic language was employed: *deutsche Denkungs- und Wesensart* – impossible to translate this idiom! National romantic feelings transformed everyday life and infused its language, metaphors and phrases.

So the 'real Germans' were separated from the 'half Germans' or 'hybrid Germans' who own another, a second passport. Also new terms and idioms were created and distributed by the mass media and they became popular at least for a time: 'Schily Germans', 'part-time Germans' or 'children's citizenship' (*Kinderstaatsbürgerschaft*). These terms are due to the planned and then ratified compromise to give the German passport to children born in Germany despite having another citizenship through their parents. However they should decide for one citizenship when they reach the age of 23 as the Liberals, the FDP, suggested successfully.

This diffusion of old and new categories also concerned 'the others' or the 'foreigners' as mentioned above. The act of 'othering' was no longer taboo, but a widely accepted practice in everyday debates around the CDU tables. The following are some of the traditional phrases which became very popular in those days: The 'strangers' were designated as 'guests' – in the tradition of the euphemistic term 'guest workers' who were brought to Germany from Southern Europe between the 1950s and the 1970s (but have actually chosen to stay in Germany permanently – a fact which German politicians had neglected for a long time). Usually no distinction was made between different groups of non-Germans. These 'guests' in general should not stay too long, nor should they be allowed to utter 'demands', for example claim the right to vote. Due to the concentration of Turks, the prototype of the foreigner was the 'Islamist'. Most of the supporters of the CDU campaign vowed to sign against the Muslim who supposedly builds mosques and oppresses his wife.

One of the most popular topics of communication were the so-called 'criminal' and *dirty Ausländer*. For some Germans whom I interviewed after they had signed the CDU lists, the fear of losing their job was one reason for their support of the CDU campaign. They were afraid of being disadvantaged, they said.

Thus, social problems and differences were explained in terms of ethnic categories and closely linked to questions of political membership.

Conclusions

To conclude, some short remarks and assumptions:

First, the plebiscitary action of the non-ruling parties created and legitimated a context in which ideas of national homogeneity (*Kulturnation, Volksnation, Schicksalsgemeinschaft*) once again came into fashion. The nation was anthropologised (Kaschuba 1998). But as a reaction to this conservative process – or sometimes also as its trigger – new models and images were disseminated, too, for example, those popular icons who were used as representatives or ambassadors for a new post-national or multicultural Germany. Germany got new faces, for example by a campaign of the government after having passed the new citizenship law. Posters, postcards and other – also virtual – advertising actions

(on the Internet¹⁴) aimed to persuade 'foreigners' to apply for the German passport and also to make the German majority acquainted with 'black-haired' or 'dark' people who should be recognised as 'typical Germans' as the texts of the posters with the "coloured" children and Turkish-German immigrants implied.

Secondly, symbols have an effect on individual and collective (national) consciousness. They create it and may help to change it. This has already been proven by the cultural nationalism of the 19th century. However, it is an open question if and how these new post-national icons, heroes and ideas invented or disseminated by the counter-campaigns (opposing the CDU's ideas) will be able – together with a now reformed citizenship law – to change or modify the traditional pictures of being German which – in the heads of not a few ordinary people – were taken for granted as unchangeable realities.

One may be sceptical about the intended long-lasting effect of short campaigns like the one of the red-green government and be more pessimistic that the supporters of the *Volksnation* might win in the long run because it is they who can base their arguments on well-known and widely accepted ideas with a long tradition, especially in Germany whose national identity was founded on primordial ahistoric concepts from the 19th century. (see e. g. Giesen 2000). But one thing can be undoubtedly ascertained as a result of these citizenship campaigns up to this point. The political style and political culture in Germany has changed: the red and white tables of the CDU will be remembered as a symbol for a plebiscitary politics which adapts to pop culture. Indeed, "Pop meets politics".¹⁵

Third, the case study shows something else of a more general importance. The diffusion of national semantics reflects, in miniature, a general qualitative intensification of national debates in Germany since reunification. This is evidently due to the collapse of the socialist countries and the reorganisation of Europe as well as to the German reunification and transformation process. It is also a result of the intensification of immigration debates and of the problem of new hostility to foreigners. All these factors may be responsible for the emergence of different focuses on national questions within the last ten years. It is still unclear whether this process will become a kind of compensating nationalisation (*nachholender Nationalisierung*) whereby Germany tries to catch up with its European neighbours and develop a new patriotism, a so-called 'quiet' national or even post-national consciousness (see e. g. Kaelble 1999). Finally, it is very much the responsibility of the politicians and the elites which new German national master narratives will emerge and whether the observable mixture of old closed concepts and new open post-national attitudes can be balanced and reflected in an open ongoing public discussion.

Notes

- 1 I gratefully acknowledge Mary Beth Stein's critical evaluation of the manuscript.
- 2 The representation of the debate in local and translocal German newspapers was analysed by Vonderau (2000).
- 3 Examples in Diez Poza (2000), especially an article in the newspaper *Die Tageszeitung* titled *Einbürgerungsbemmnis Frau* (13/14.2, 1999, VII).

- 4 See for example "Wir haben sofort ja gesagt". In: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 5.3.99, 5; see also *Berliner Morgenpost*, 7.3.99, 5; *Die Tageszeitung*, 19.3.99.
- 5 For example: the youth magazine of *Süddeutsche Zeitung* ('jetzt', 8, 22.2.99).
- 6 See "Gegen, doppelte Staatshörigkeit". In: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 11.2.99, 40.
- 7 *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, *Die Welt* and *Die Tageszeitung* printed the advertisement on the same day (30./31.1.1999). See also the fierce discussion about this campaign reflected in articles such as "Der Pass bedeutet auch Heimat", in: *Tagesspiegel*, 31.1.1999, 3. See also the comment by Heribert Prantl: "Laut, lauter, unlauter. Doppelte Staatsbürgerschaft: Was die Werbung dafür und die Kritik daran gemeinsam haben", in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 2.2.1999, 4.
- 8 "Doppelte Staatsbürgerschaft für Caroline?", in: *Der Tagesspiegel*, 25.1.99, 32.
- 9 "Claudias Beitrag zur doppelten Staatsbürgerschaft", in: *B. Z.*, 5.2.1999, 1.
- 10 See the ironical comment by Edo Reents: "Abba lebt! Der Grand Prix Eurovision und seine göttliche Botschaft", in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 21.5.1999, 21.
- 11 Alexander Gorkow, Christoph Schwennicke: "Drei Engel für Schily", in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 1.2.1999, 19.
- 12 Edo Reents: "Abba lebt! Der Grand Prix Eurovision und seine göttliche Botschaft", in: *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 21.5.1999, 21.
- 13 See also Diez Poza's observations (Diez Posa 2000).
- 14 See www.einbuengerung.de.
- 15 See note 12; see also Soeffner (1998).

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Die Kollektivrepressalien gegen das niederländische Dorf Putten in 1944: Religion als Vector of Memory (Erinnerungsmittel)

MADOLON DE KEIZER

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Im Jahr 1944, in der Nacht vom 30. September auf den 1. Oktober, verübte einige Kilometer außerhalb des eigentlichen Dorfes – doch noch innerhalb der Gemeinde Putten – eine örtliche Widerstandsgruppe ein Attentat auf ein deutsches Personenauto. Das Attentat scheiterte: keiner der vier deutschen Soldaten, die sich in dem Auto befunden hatten, konnte sofort getötet werden. Drei Soldaten konnten entkommen, der vierte wurde gefangen genommen und ist bald darauf seinen Verwundungen erlegen. Zudem starb bei der Aktion auch ein Widerstandskämpfer. Nachdem einer der geflohenen Soldaten Alarm geschlagen hatte, zogen einige Stunden nach dem Attentat etwa tausend Wehrmachtssoldaten einen dichten Kordon um das Dorf. Mit Ausnahme der Alten, Kranken und Müttern mit kleinen Kindern wurde die Bevölkerung aus den umliegenden Bauernhöfen zum Dorfkern getrieben, wo die Männer getrennt von den Frauen festgehalten wurden; später am Abend wurden die Frauen wieder freigelassen. Am folgenden Tag verkündeten die Deutschen ihr Urteil: alle Männer im Alter zwischen 17 und 50 Jahren, die nach den verschiedenen Ausleseverfahren noch übrig geblieben waren, sollten ins Durchgangslager Amersfoort deportiert werden. Von dort aus wurden sie einige Tage später in das Arbeitslager Neuengamme bei Hamburg und dann zur Zwangsarbeit in die Arbeitslager in Norddeutschland und an der niederländischen Grenze gebracht. Unter äußerst widrigen Wetter-, Arbeits- und Hygieneverhältnissen legten sie Verteidigungswälle an. Die Lager hiessen Meppen-Versen, Husum und Ladelund. Von den 589 Männern und Jungen, die nach Neuengamme deportiert worden waren, kehrten nach der Befreiung nur vierzig zurück. Die schrecklichen Ereignisse stürzten das schwer zerstörte Putten – als zweite Repressalie waren noch etwa hundert Häuser und Wohnungen niedergebrannt worden – in tiefe kollektive Trauer, denn die meisten der deportierten Männer stammten aus Putten selbst.