

“Deprived of all rights”

Hannes Hofbauer presents his new book

by Marita Brune-Koch*

Have you ever heard the name Jacques Baud? Well, surely you have; after all, you are reading “Swiss Standpoint”, a publication that has reported extensively on him and about him. You will find hardly anything about him in the mainstream media. It was precisely this question – “Do you know Jacques Baud?” – that Hannes Hofbauer, author and publisher, put to a group of bookstore clerks. The answer: no one had ever heard the name. That is symptomatic. Ask amongst your acquaintances, and you will have similar experiences. Yet an incredible scandal is linked to that name. It is quite simply about the abolition of the rule of law and civil rights. Hannes Hofbauer has published a book on the sanction’s regime of the “democratic” West: “Aller Rechte beraubt” (Deprived of All Rights). On 13 March, he presented it to the public at “Swiss Standpoint”.

The occasion and core of the presentation and the book of the same name is the EU’s current sanctions regime. Without any legal basis, without a fair hearing, without legal proceedings and without the opportunity to defend themselves, citizens are being deprived of their livelihoods: their assets are “frozen”, and in some cases even confiscated – in other words, stolen. Under threat of punishment, no one is allowed to support them, either with money or with donations in kind; they are not permitted to enter the EU or fly over EU territory. All this happens without the public ever finding out. The sanctions lack any legal basis. “Even the freezing of assets, which is de facto expropriation, contravenes Article 14 of the German Basic Law. It states: “Property and the right of inheritance are guaranteed. Their scope and limits are determined by law.” (Page 169)¹

Disenfranchisement throughout history

With its regime of injustice, the EU finds itself in “good company” – historically speaking. “Ostracised, outcast, expropriated. The history of hu-



Hannes Hofbauer talks about the current EU sanctions regime. (Picture sv)

manity is full of authoritarian repression that turns unwelcome subjects and unpopular citizens into subjects without rights.” (p. 9) With this, Hofbauer begins an interesting review of the history of disenfranchisement. Even Cicero was dispossessed and declared an outlaw. Why? “His political commitment to the Republic and to free speech had placed him on the proscription list, which stripped him of his citizenship and condemned him to death.” (p. 11) From the Middle Ages we know of the ban, which deprived those affected of every right and even authorised their killing. It was imposed for serious crimes, but also for opposition to the Church and the prince. In the 12th and 13th centuries, unpopular citizens were banished. A famous example: *Martin Luther*. With the emergence of the nation-state, which assigned a specific territory to a person as a citizen, the revocation of citizenship and expulsion came into vogue. Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, Austro-Fascist Austria and the Stalinist Soviet Union expatriated people on a massive scale.

After the Second World War, in the Federal Republic of Germany, only people who held a second citizenship could be stripped of their citizenship. Switzerland follows a similar procedure. In Eastern Europe, however, large-scale expatriation continued even after the war. *Hofbauer* describes the developments there in detail in his book.

People from all over the world on EU lists

The current sanctioning of citizens by the US and the EU follows in the tradition of totalitarianism and oppression under the banner of the “War on

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Terror” (from 2001). The first people listed by the EU were Basque separatists and ETA supporters. They were followed by people from the Islamic world and supporters of the Palestinians. From 2014, the EU introduced a sanctions regime in connection with the Ukraine-Russia war.

Initially, citizens and organisations of the Russian Federation were affected. Eventually, sanctions began to be imposed on “Westerners” as well: a Slovenian, a Frenchman, for example *Nicolas Guillou*, a judge at the *International Criminal Court*, and an American. With *Alina Lipp* and *Thomas Röper*, the process of placing German citizens living abroad on the list began: they are not allowed to return to their homeland, their assets are frozen, and no one is permitted to support them. Then the focus shifted to including German citizens living in Germany, such as the German citizen *Hüseyin Dogru*, who lives in Berlin. And finally, two Swiss citizens are also affected: *Nathalie Yamb*, a Swiss citizen whose mother is Swiss and whose father is from Cameroon; and Jacques Baud, a colonel in the Swiss Army General Staff and an analyst of current affairs. He lives in Brussels.²

Most recently, even Africans and a Chinese businessman have been placed on the list – in other words, people who have nothing to do with the EU and over whom the EU has no authority.

Law-abiding citizens – yet ostracised

The ordinary citizen, who believes they live in a functioning constitutional state, now wonders what all these people have in common, and why they have all ended up on this list? Have they not committed some offence after all? To put it quite plainly: not a single one of the individuals concerned was placed on the list because they had broken any law. Hannes Hofbauer examines many cases in detail, citing the justifications the EU gives for its sanctions. None of the justifications would stand up in a legal proceeding. Taking the sanctioning of Thomas Röper as an example, Hofbauer sums up: “The reasons cited for Röper’s listing illustrate why the measure is being implemented without a court trial. No judge could have handed down a guilty verdict on this basis.” (p. 169)

The common ground underlying all these cases is essentially this: “People with the wrong convictions, with the wrong narrative, are ostracised.” (p. 157) Those in power in the EU wish to accept only one interpretation, one narrative re-

garding the Russia-Ukraine war, regarding the EU, regarding the Israel-Palestine conflict, regarding world affairs in general: their own. All other viewpoints are to be banned and suppressed as a threat and a destabilising force to the state.

A case in point is the justification for the sanctions against Nathalie Yamb (whose “crime” essentially consists of campaigning for the independence of African countries): “Nathalie Yamb therefore supports actions or political measures attributable to the Government of the Russian Federation which undermine or threaten democracy, the rule of law, stability or security in the Union or in its Member States, through her involvement in the use of information manipulation.” (p. 187)

“Disenfranchisement for the “wrong” analysis”

Under this heading, Hannes Hofbauer discusses the case of Jacques Baud. He is accused of being a “mouthpiece for pro-Russian propaganda” (p. 202). *That* is propaganda, made by the EU! Jacques Baud explains that he took great care not to use any Russian propaganda sources; “I work exclusively with non-Russian sources”. He has declined all invitations from Russian media. (p. 204) It is embarrassing to see the transparent and easily refutable claims with which the EU seeks to send a man to a civil death. Those in charge at the EU must be very sure that they retain control over the information, for if their flimsy and hair-raising arguments were to come to light, they might have to resign.

And Switzerland?

The Austrian Hannes Hofbauer praises the fact that Switzerland has so far not adopted any of the many sanction packages against individuals. Bern protested against the sanctions against Jacques Baud in Brussels. Yes, that is true. And we Swiss are glad of it. But we must remain vigilant. Even here in Switzerland there are supporters of such dictatorships of opinion. The Federal Department of Foreign Affairs only intervened on Baud’s behalf in Brussels after 14 days, following massive protests here. Which, in turn, shows that protesting does make a difference.

An uplifting read – despite everything

The subject matter is grim and distressing for any alert citizen. Nevertheless, it was a pleasure

to listen to Hannes Hofbauer. It is well worth reading his book. He traces historical and political contexts with great precision. He never falls into black-and-white thinking but remains highly nuanced. For example, he describes the events in Ukraine surrounding the Maidan very precisely, drawing on his own observations and research. Even if one has already read and heard a great deal on the subject, reading his account provides an even more precise and, in parts, astonishing picture of the events and their context. And, not least, it is heartening to hear from him as a person who is not deterred by the apparent omnipotence of those currently in power, but who courageously continues to pursue the path of research, humanity, freedom and justice.

(Translation "Swiss Standpoint")

¹ Hannes Hofbauer. *Aller Rechte beraubt. Mit aussergerichtlichen EU-Sanktionen zum autoritären Staat*. Pro-media Verlag. Vienna 2026

² Cf. <https://swiss-standpoint.ch/news-detailansicht-enschweiz/eu-arbitrariness-against-swiss-citizen.html>

Democracy or dictatorship?

A fundamental principle of any democracy is the separation of powers, which divides state authority among three independent branches: the legislature (law-making), the executive (administration/implementation) and the judiciary (adjudication). To safeguard civil liberties and prevent the abuse of power, this principle is enshrined in the constitutions of democratic states.

By imposing sanctions on individuals, the European Council – acting on a proposal by Kaja Kallas in her capacity as “High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy” – is disregarding the democratic achievement of the separation of powers. A representative of the executive (Kaja Kallas) and part of the European legislature (representatives of European governments as the European Council) are high-handedly assuming the role of the judiciary by imposing severe penalties. And this is being done without clear legal foundations having first been adopted and ratified, let alone any violations thereof having been examined by an independent judiciary. A hallmark of any dictatorship.