

## Hollande and Merkel

### Fireworks ahead

Elysée The Economist Apr 19th 2012, 10:23 by S.P. | PARIS

Angela Merkel must be relieved that she never did turn up in France, as promised, to support Nicolas Sarkozy's re-election bid. "We belong to the same political family," she said in a joint televised [interview](#) at the Elysée Palace back in February, "It is entirely natural that I support his campaign."

Since then, not only has there been no further word of encouragement from Mrs Merkel, but her French friend has now seized more than one occasion in recent days to have a go at the European Central Bank. At a rally at the Place de la Concorde on Sunday he said that there should be "no taboo" about discussing the role of the ECB, and that the central bank should "support growth". Yesterday, on [RMC radio](#) (forward to about 23'15"), Mr Sarkozy elaborated. Asked by Jean-Jacques Bourdin if he would ask the ECB to play a different role, he replied: "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes." He went on:

There is clearly a question to be asked about the role of the ECB, not simply the control of inflation but also of full employment and growth, along with a certain number of subjects. The exchange rate, for example: what is the right value for the euro against the dollar?....These are debates that we have to have with the governor of the ECB.

Unsurprisingly, none of this has gone down well in Berlin, where the ECB's independence from political influence is paramount and there is absolutely no question of changing the bank's statutes, as Mr Sarkozy well knows. Indeed, he himself agreed back in November in Strasbourg not to comment on the central bank's activities "out of respect for the independence of this essential institution". But this is campaign time in France, Mr Sarkozy is in a hole, and bashing the central bank is a popular political hobby—on the right and the left.

Indeed, when François Hollande first announced that he would "renegotiate" the fiscal pact, a hard-won European agreement on budgetary discipline dear to Ms Merkel, Sarkozy aides mocked his exaggerated sense of his own self-importance. If Mr Sarkozy couldn't persuade the German chancellor on that score, they said, what on earth gave Mr Hollande, a novice on the international scene, the idea that he could do any better? (France has signed the treaty, but will not have ratified it before the presidential election.)

My first impression, having sat next to Mr Hollande at a small lunch with foreign reporters in February to discuss this among other things, was that the Socialist candidate was chiefly after a symbolic gesture to enable him to claim a victory of sorts against Brussels and Berlin. He said then that he was not looking for a full rewrite of the treaty, but a greater emphasis on growth "either in the treaty, or as a complement to it". He drew the comparison with 1997, when Lionel Jospin, then Socialist prime minister, took over and insisted that the word "growth" be added to the original "stability pact", which at the time had also already been signed.

But I now wonder if that is right. Having spoken to a well placed Socialist figure this morning, my sense is that Mr Hollande is steeling himself for a genuine fight ahead of the next European summit, on June 28th and 29th, and that he will not make do with a mere gesture. Yes, said the source, "diplomats will find a legal form that works, whether it is a modification or an additional protocol". But his point was that Mr Hollande fully intends to go straight to Berlin, if he is elected, and to take with him a proposal that the Socialists have already been drawn up in the form of a memorandum.

According to the source, this will include an emphasis on growth not just in the form of words, but in means too. Mr Hollande, for instance, wants to launch European "project bonds" in order to finance

infrastructure and energy projects; to boost the role of the European Investment Bank in growth-supporting projects; and to argue for a Europe-level financial-transactions tax to pay for stimulus measures.

People around Mr Hollande scent victory, and this is hugely boosting their sense of their possible future political clout with Germany. They also consider that they have a fair amount of potential international support, from the IMF and Washington, for instance, given current worries about austerity crushing growth in Europe. In an interview this week with [Handelsblatt](#), Mr Hollande said that he would “block” the treaty’s ratification in the French parliament if it does not “contain measures to support growth”.

All of which would make for instant fireworks in the first few weeks of an Hollande presidency. “We believe strongly in Franco-German friendship,” said the source this morning: “But we want things to move very quickly and we are very determined.” Message received loud and clear.

## IMF is a troublesome ally

18 April 2012 [NRC Handelsblad](#) Rotterdam



IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde at a Paris press conference in October, 2011.

**The International Monetary Fund, which recently warned Europe of the possibility of another crisis, forms part of the troika charged with rescuing countries in financial difficulty. However, over the last year under the presidency of France’s Christine Lagarde, the organisation which is often presented as a saviour has adopted a less conciliatory tone.**

Last Christmas, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde offered the German Chancellor a trinket from Hermès. Angela Merkel also had a small gift for Christine Lagarde: a CD of the Berlin Philharmonic playing Beethoven.

Notwithstanding this thoughtful behaviour, the personal relationship between the two women is now being sorely tested: in the wake of two years of intense involvement in the struggle to overcome the crisis in Europe, the IMF has begun to openly express its discontent.

In the Dominique Strauss-Kahn (DSK) era, it was reasonable to assume that China, Canada and Brazil would also adopt a similar line, but this is no longer the case. Today’s IMF is very different to the IMF of one year ago. For DSK, who had his sights set on the French presidency, a leading role in the campaign to save the euro was a godsend. Under Christine Lagarde, the IMF has become “a less stable partner”, points out a European civil servant.

### *A second-tier partner*

The difference in personality between economist and politician DSK – who resigned amid rape allegations in May 2011 – and the lawyer and corporate CEO, Christine Lagarde, who succeeded him, only partly explains this change.

Perhaps more importantly, the IMF is increasingly uncomfortable with the role that has been attributed to it in the “troika” formed with the ECB and the European Commission. In the eurozone, the organisation, which is used to a high degree of autonomy, has become a “second tier partner”.

The Europeans in the troika, who are extremely strict in their approach, mainly take their orders from Germany. In the event of a divergence of opinion, the IMF is often the only member of the troika to argue in support of Greece.

“The IMF should never have allowed itself to become involved in this situation”, remarks Charles Wyplosz, of the Graduate Institute of Geneva. “It has been politically implicated.”

Already, under Dominique Strauss-Kahn, non-European countries were protesting, and critical voices were also raised from within the organisation. But the IMF’s second in command, America’s John Lipsky, was unable to effectively counter his inspired European chief.

The Director of the IMF’s European Department at the time, Antonio Borges, who was also a former deputy governor of the Banco de Portugal, was similarly reluctant to speak out against his boss. A Portuguese director with responsibility for Portugal – this was also one of Dominique Strauss-Kahn’s initiatives.

Strauss-Kahn decided everything. He telephoned heads of state and sat in on European summits. He had considerable influence with the German Chancellor, and had just boarded a plane Berlin when he was arrested. Angela Merkel was plunged into a state a shock. "This is serious", she said when she heard news of the charges, "I need him!"

Shortly after the departure of Strauss-Kahn, Lipsky also left the organisation. According to Charles Wyplosz, his successor, David Lipton, is "very powerful. He works under instructions from Clinton and Obama and embodies the opinion of the White House. Lipton believes that the European measures to counter the crisis are worthless".

### *An extended critique of Germany's European policy*

In November, Christine Lagarde dispensed with the services of Antonio Borges. His replacement, Anglo-Iranian Reza Moghadam, who is a competent official with no specific links to the eurozone, has been appointed at a time when the management of the IMF is increasingly adopting an Anglo-Saxon approach rather than a European one.

The British and the Americans have tightened their hold on a crisis, which has prompted two schools of thought on the issue of countermeasures: on the one hand, there are the proponents of budgetary discipline, and on the other, there are those who argue that austerity represents a danger to the economy. Angela Merkel has demonstrated her allegiance to the first of these, Christine Lagarde is now identified with the second.

Outside of the framework of the troika, Christine Lagarde has sent an IMF team to Italy. She wants European banks to raise more capital, and favours protecting the eurozone with a gigantic firewall and eurozone bonds: a position that has met with some annoyance in Europe. During her tenure as French Minister of Finance, Christine Lagarde had also pleaded for a powerful bailout fund and eurozone bonds, however, at the time Angela Merkel succeeded in brushing aside both of these proposals. However, she will meet with increasing difficulty in maintaining this position now that Europe wants to obtain funds from the IMF.

Recently, all of these issues surfaced in speech delivered by Lagarde in Berlin. The previous evening, at a private dinner with Angela Merkel, she offered the German Chancellor an orange blossom scented candle symbolising "hope". As Christine Lagarde later explained, it was intended to set the tone "in the wake of difficult discussions" prompted by a preview of the text of her speech, which was an extended critique of Germany's European policy.

## A New Dispute over Euro Rescue Fund

### Spain Wants Billions For its Banks

A number of euro zone countries and senior officials at the European Central Bank would like to see the euro bailout fund changed so that it can provide direct aid to banks. This could help Spain, which has emerged in recent days as a new center of the euro crisis, but Germany is opposed.

With an eye on the growing banking crisis in southern Europe, particularly in Spain, an increasing number of governments as well as senior representatives of the European Central Bank are pleading for the European Union's temporary euro backstop fund to be used to provide financial institutions with direct assistance.

Sources familiar with the discussions told the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* that the parties would like to see the criteria used by the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) to allocate aid be relaxed to include financial institutions in the event they represent a greater problem than a country's government finances. So far, this aid has been paid to governments, which in turn provided some forms of assistance to beleaguered banks.

Such a move would enable the temporary euro-zone rescue fund, the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF), to directly transfer money to these banks, bypassing national governments.

*Süddeutsche* reports that the primary supporter for the calls is the Spanish government of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, which is having increasing difficulty raising money on the markets to fill the country's budget shortfall. Relaxing the rules could help ease the burden of the banking crisis his government faces and it would enable Spain's comparably low debt-to-GDP ratio to remain constant. In addition, it would mean that his country wouldn't be forced to implement strict savings and reform measures that are stipulated by the rescue fund in exchange for aid. As some observers have noted, austerity measures appear to be contributing to Spain's slide into recession.

### Germany Rejects Bank Support

Some senior representatives of the European Central Bank are also backing the proposal because it would mean that the ECB would no longer be alone in its efforts to stabilize the European banking sector. In recent months, the ECB has lent commercial banks a total of more than €1 trillion in [cheap money](#) in an effort to stop a credit crunch last seen after the collapse of the Lehman Brothers investment bank in 2008.

But it would also entail a number of losers -- namely the most important EFSF donor countries, led by Germany, because they would no longer be able to force countries obtaining the aid to push through reforms. In the event of a bank's collapse, the money those countries had lent would also be lost.

In Berlin, German officials have firmly rejected the proposal. "Spain doesn't need an aid program, and if it were to need one, then only under the known conditions," a government source told the newspaper.

Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble, for his part, has said he believes that Spain, Italy and Europe as a whole are headed down the right path in the financial crisis. But the government source speaking to the *Süddeutsche* pointed out another hitch: A direct payment of EFSF funds to private banks is not permissible under current legal provisions.

*kla -- with wire reports*

## NATO After Libya

NATO can be proud of the role it played in supporting the overthrow of Libya's murderous dictator, Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi. But the alliance's own confidential assessment, reported in [The Times on Sunday](#), pointed out that European members, who were among the first to call for military action, could never have pulled it off without extensive American involvement.

The Libya campaign was supposed to be a demonstration of European leadership. But even Europe's most sophisticated militaries lacked the specialized aircraft and trained personnel needed to intercept Libyan government communications and verify potential targets, and they quickly ran short of precision-guided munitions.

The Pentagon stepped in to provide what Europe could not. But that experience is one more reminder that Europe is still not ready for prime time — and, no matter how important the stakes, European militaries are unable to conduct sustained air operations on their own, even in their own neighborhood. Without urgent efforts to remedy these shortcomings, NATO faces a bleak future of military marginalization and trans-Atlantic rancor.

Europe has never shouldered its fair share of NATO's collective military burden. But, while Washington and the American taxpayer were prepared to put up with such free-riding during the cold war, patience is running out. Last year, the United States devoted 4.8 percent of its gross domestic product to military spending. European NATO members averaged only 1.6 percent. While the Pentagon needs to be far more disciplined in its own spending, the Europeans need to spend more on their militaries and spend it more rationally.


The operational failures in Libya grow directly out of Europe's chronic military underinvestment and out-of-date strategic priorities. Most European allies failed to invest adequately in military modernization when budgets were flush. And too much of what Europe did spend went to vanity projects like the independent nuclear deterrents maintained by Britain and France. Too little has been spent preparing for more realistic security challenges like combating transnational terrorist networks and deflecting the rampages of cornered dictators, like Qaddafi and, a decade before that, Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia. Military force is not always the best answer. But, when it is, Europe must be able to provide its share.

With all European governments committed to arbitrary and unrealistic deficit reduction targets, military spending is again being slighted. But by continuing to shortchange overdue military investments, Europe is undermining the alliance on which its security depends.

We are encouraged that earlier this year, [NATO decided to acquire](#) a new air-to-ground surveillance system and to expand member countries' aerial refueling fleets. That's a good start. But it won't be enough.

Next month's [NATO summit meeting in Chicago](#) will likely feature speeches celebrating the alliance's past glories. It must be accompanied by hard private bargaining about better burden-sharing and addressing the yawning gaps exposed in Libya. NATO's credibility is on the line. And that is a serious problem for Europe and for the United States.

# Longévité et dépendance: le paradoxe français

Le Figaro Par  Delphine Chayet - le 18/04/2012

INFOGRAPHIE - Champions de la longévité en Europe, les Français sont mal classés pour ce qui est du bien-vieillir, sans incapacité.

D'année en année, l'[espérance de vie](#) des Français continue à s'allonger. Hélas, ce temps gagné correspond à des mois passés en mauvaise santé. La France se trouve ainsi dans une situation paradoxale. Alors qu'il est le premier en Europe pour l'espérance de vie des femmes, qui atteint 85,3 ans en 2010, notre pays est très mal classé lorsqu'on examine le bien-vieillir.

«Jusqu'à présent, lorsqu'on voulait se faire une idée de l'état de santé d'une population, on ne pouvait étudier que le taux de mortalité, un indicateur purement quantitatif», souligne [Jean-Marie Robine](#), directeur de recherche à l'[Inserm](#). Les épidémiologistes disposent désormais d'une information qualitative supplémentaire.

Lancée en 2008, une enquête à grande échelle menée dans 27 pays de l'Union européenne permet de mesurer l'espérance de vie sans incapacité, c'est-à-dire sans limitation ressentie dans la vie quotidienne, le travail et les déplacements. Ces résultats rendus publics aujourd'hui sont une incitation forte à l'action politique pour reculer le plus tard possible l'âge d'entrée dans la dépendance.

## Influence du niveau culturel

En France, l'espérance de vie sans incapacité était de 63,5 ans en 2010. Sur ce critère, notre pays se situe en dixième position en Europe, derrière Malte (71,6 ans sans limitation dans les activités usuelles), la Suède, la Grèce ou la Bulgarie (où l'espérance de vie est pourtant parmi les plus courtes d'Europe).

Une Française peut donc espérer vivre 75 % de sa vie sans incapacité, alors que cette proportion monte à 85 % pour une Suédoise. «La France fait partie des pays qui connaissent une expansion de l'incapacité, avec de plus en plus de personnes âgées dépendantes», résume Jean-Marie Robine.

Les hommes, quant à eux, ont une espérance de vie de 78,2 ans en France en 2010, ce qui les place en huitième position en Europe, après la Suède et l'Espagne notamment. Leur longévité moyenne en bonne santé est de 61,9 ans (en baisse depuis 2008). Partout en Europe, les femmes vivent d'ailleurs plus longtemps que les hommes et passent une plus grande proportion de leur vie avec une incapacité.

Plusieurs facteurs peuvent expliquer ces différences entre pays. Une étude de l'Institut national d'études démographiques (Ined) a montré que le niveau culturel influe sur l'âge d'entrée dans la dépendance. Plus on est éduqué, plus la perte d'autonomie sera tardive.

La prévention des maladies cardio-vasculaires, la promotion de l'activité physique à la maturité et même à l'âge avancé, la qualité de l'alimentation et le maintien des activités sociales jouent également un rôle majeur.

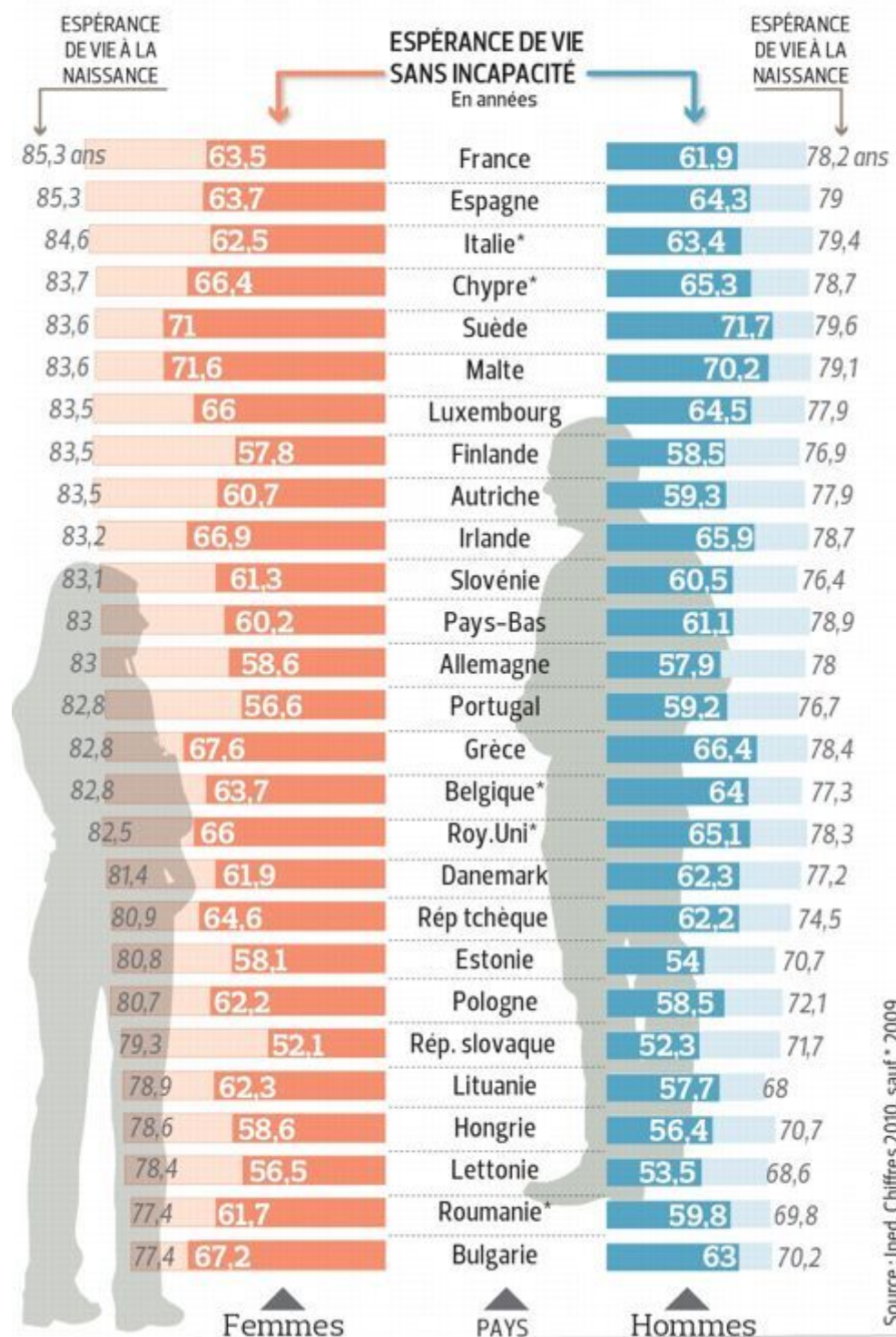
## Indicateur subjectif

«Cette comparaison internationale est très difficile à interpréter, car elle repose sur un indicateur subjectif», nuance toutefois le Pr Olivier Saint-Jean, gériatre et chef de service à l'hôpital Georges-Pompidou à Paris. Dans chaque pays, la même question a été posée par les chercheurs européens: «Dans quelle mesure avez-vous été limité(e) depuis au moins six mois, à cause d'un problème de santé, dans les activités que les gens font habituellement?»

Or, selon le Pr Saint-Jean, «la perception de l'incapacité peut être très différente selon les cultures. Cela explique en grande partie le nombre important de paradoxes dans ces résultats».

L'étude a au moins le mérite de replacer la perte d'autonomie dans le débat. Alors que l'objectif européen est d'augmenter l'espérance de vie de deux ans d'ici à 2020, les chercheurs remettent l'accent sur l'importance des politiques de santé publique et de prévention, pour améliorer la qualité de vie des personnes âgées. Selon l'Inspection générale des affaires sociales, le nombre de personnes dépendantes doublera d'ici à 2060 pour passer de 1,15 million de personnes à 2,3 millions.

## Les Européens inégaux devant le « bien-vieillir »





## Geldpolitik

### Gutachter sehen EZB-Unabhängigkeit gefährdet

19.04.2012 · Deutlicher kann man es kaum formulieren: In ihrem Frühjahrsgutachten warnen die großen deutschen Wirtschaftsforschungsinstitute, dass „Unabhängigkeit und Glaubwürdigkeit der EZB auf dem Spiel stehen“. Deutliche Worte finden sie auch zur deutschen Finanzpolitik.

Von [Philip Plickert](#)



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In dem Gutachten der Forschungsinstitute wird die Europäische Zentralbank scharf kritisiert: „Es besteht die Gefahr, dass die Geldpolitik aus ihrer inzwischen eingetretenen Zwangslage nicht mehr freikommt.“

Die großen deutschen Wirtschaftsforschungsinstitute rechnen mit knapp einem Prozent Wachstum für die deutsche Wirtschaft, sie üben aber deutliche Kritik an der Finanz- und Geldpolitik. In ihrer noch unveröffentlichten Gemeinschaftsdiagnose warnen die Ökonomen zudem mit Blick auf die Europäische Zentralbank (EZB): „Unabhängigkeit und Glaubwürdigkeit der EZB stehen auf dem Spiel.“ Seit Beginn der Finanzkrise habe diese immer mehr Sondermaßnahmen ergriffen, seit Ausbruch der Staatsschuldenkrise interveniere sie noch stärker und stütze sogar indirekt Staatsfinanzen. Dies könne nicht mehr lange gutgehen.

„Es besteht die Gefahr, dass die Geldpolitik aus ihrer inzwischen eingetretenen Zwangslage nicht mehr freikommt“, heißt es nach Informationen der Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung in dem Gutachten der acht Institute, darunter das Münchner Ifo-Institut, das Kieler IfW, das Hallenser IWH und das Essener RWI. Das Gutachten wird an diesem Donnerstag in Berlin offiziell der Bundesregierung übergeben.

## Strukturelles Defizit noch zu hoch

Nach Informationen der F.A.Z. kritisieren die Ökonomen, dass Deutschland sein strukturelles Defizit trotz der recht günstigen Wirtschaftsentwicklung nicht ausreichend abbaue. Für dieses Jahr erwarten sie ein Wachstum von 0,9 Prozent in Deutschland - etwas mehr als der Internationale Währungsfonds mit 0,6 Prozent -, im kommenden Jahr sogar 2 Prozent. Entsprechend der besseren Konjunktur sinke das Staatsdefizit auf 0,6 Prozent und 0,2 Prozent des Bruttoinlandsprodukts in diesem und im nächsten Jahr.

„Die Institute meinen aber, dass das nicht reicht“, sagte eine mit dem Gutachten vertraute Person in Berlin. Denn die deutsche Wirtschaft ist wegen der zwei starken Aufschwungsjahre hoch ausgelastet und kommt 2013 in die Überauslastung. Deshalb müsste der Staat nach der Schuldenbremse nicht nur kein Defizit, sondern einen Überschuss machen.

Für den Arbeitsmarkt erwarten die Institute eine günstige Entwicklung: Dieses Jahr sinke die Zahl der Arbeitslosen auf durchschnittlich 2,8 Millionen, nächstes Jahr auf 2,6 Millionen. Die Beschäftigtenzahl steigt deutlich stärker, um 470.000 und 325.000, weil auch Menschen aus der „stillen Reserve“ auf den Arbeitsmarkt gehen.

## Zweifel an Schuldentragfähigkeit der Krisenländer

Kritisch sieht die Lage in den angeschlagenen Ländern der südeuropäischen Peripherie aus. In einer Schwerpunktanalyse wird die Schuldentragfähigkeit von Griechenland und Portugal als sehr fragwürdig dargestellt. Auch zu Irland, Italien und Spanien melden die Wirtschaftsforscher Zweifel an, ob diese ihre Schulden schultern können. Es sei möglich, doch müssten alle angekündigten Strukturreformen und Konsolidierungsschritte eingehalten werden. Falls sich einige Annahmen als zu optimistisch herausstellten, etwa die Wirtschaft in der Rezession noch stärker abrutsche oder in den nächsten Jahren das Wachstum geringer ausfalle als erhofft, dann werde es für Spanien und Italien schwierig, ihre Schulden zu bedienen. Deshalb forderten die Finanzmärkte schon jetzt hohe Risikoprämien.

Unterdessen hat das Münchner Ifo-Institut seine Kritik an der sich zuspitzenden Target-Problematik verschärft. Target ist das grenzüberschreitende Zahlungsverkehrssystem der Zentralbanken des Eurosystems. Die Deutsche Bundesbank hat bis Ende März Forderungen von mehr als 615 Milliarden Euro gegenüber den anderen, vor allem südeuropäischen Zentralbanken angehäuft. Nach aktuellen Berechnungen des Instituts bezog in den ersten drei Monaten dieses Jahres die italienische Notenbank Target-Kredite für 79 Milliarden Euro und die spanische Notenbank für 77 Milliarden Euro. Seit Juli 2011 seien von den Notenbanken dieser Länder Target-Kredite im Umfang von 483 Milliarden Euro gezogen worden, um ihre Volkswirtschaften mit billigen Krediten versorgen zu können. „Leidtragende sind aus Sicht des Ifo-Instituts die Sparer der noch soliden Länder Europas, deren Vermögensanlage nun zur EZB umgelenkt wurde“, schreibt das Institut, [dessen Präsident Hans-Werner Sinn zu den schärfsten Kritikern des Target-Systems zählt.](#)

Quelle: F.A.Z.

## Demography and growth

### Workers go walkabout

The Economist Apr 18th 2012, 13:13 by Buttonwood

A SHORT post (it's deadline day) just to point readers in the direction of the blog of Simon Hedlin Larsson who took the UN population projections and put them in graphical form. The first [post](#) shows the falls in the share of population by working age (defined as 15-64) by country. While the American population is still growing overall, you can see that this ratio is set to decline as the baby boomers retire. On this measure, the US looks slightly worse than Russia. Instead of the Europeans, three Asian nations sit at the bottom of the table.

Still Europe's position is pretty awful, as this second [post](#) shows. Not only is the proportion of workers falling, the total number of workers is falling as well. As he comments, it is much harder to repay your debts when you have 20% fewer workers.

[www.SimonsBlogg.se](http://www.SimonsBlogg.se)

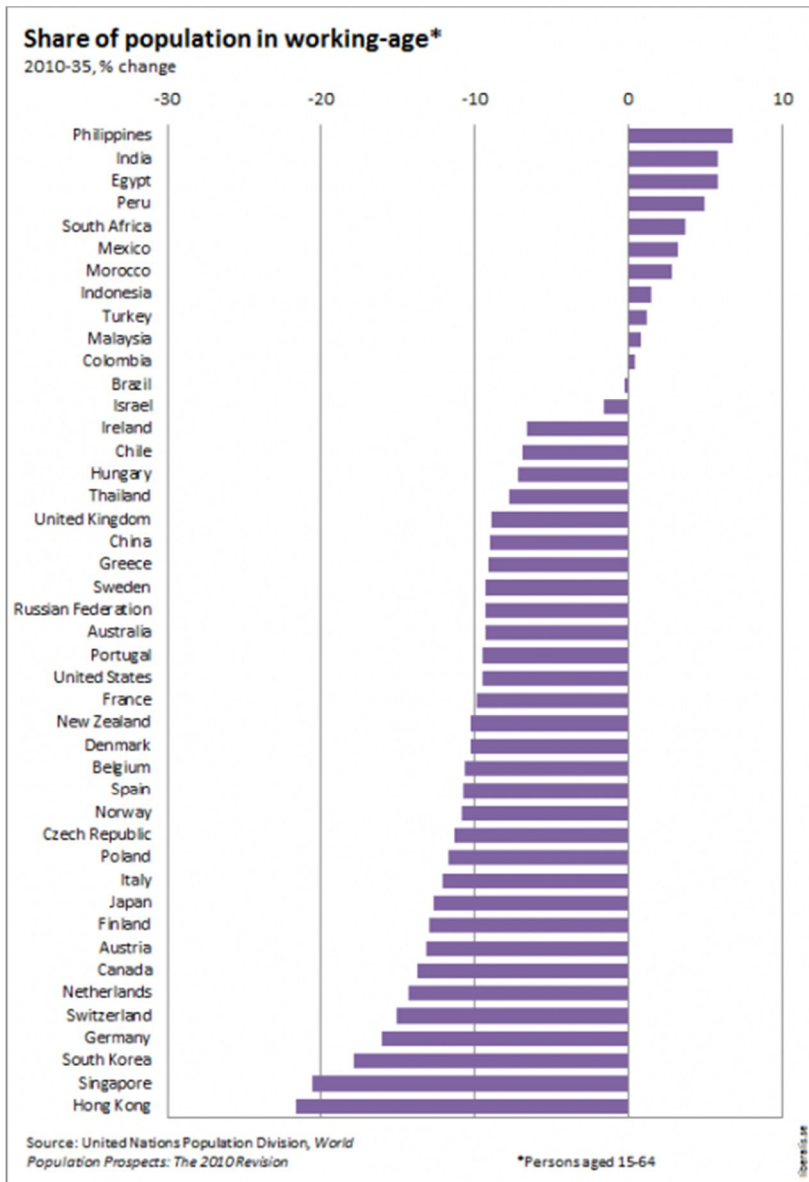
Simon Hedlin Larsson's potpourri of thoughts

### Demographic challenge ahead

Posted on [17 March 2012](#) | [2 Comments](#)

After being inspired by a [blog post](#) by *The Economist's* Buttonwood correspondent, I drew the following graph.

One picture raises more questions than a thousand words:



(Feel free to use this figure for your own purposes, but please do not forget to mention the source, which is this blog.)

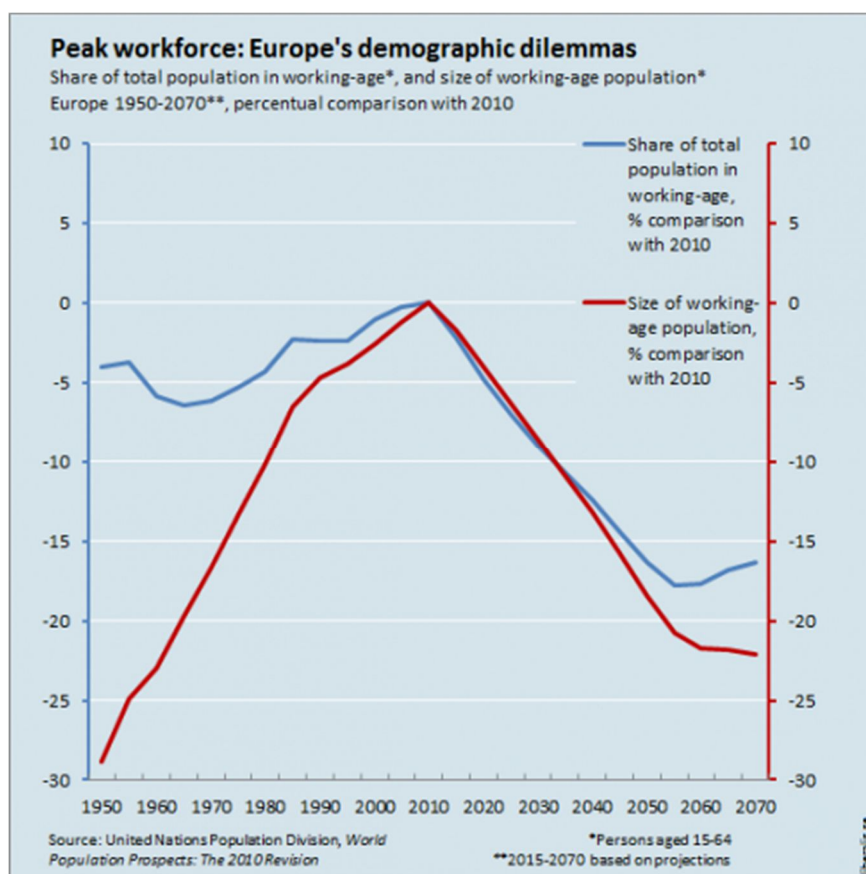
## Peak workforce: How should Europe afford the future? Part 2

Posted on [18 March 2012](#) | [Leave a comment](#)

It strikes this blogger that the projections in the figure posted earlier today might not seem like a big deal. From sixty-something to fifty-something in share of total population in working-age. Why would it matter? Well, it does matter. A lot. The fifty-something needs to be put in relation to the sixty-something.

If there are six persons working in a company and one quits without being replaced the company loses one-sixth of its total workforce. That is a lot. And if the company in question needs to provide pension and other benefits to the sixth person, this will lead to great pressure on the remaining five workers. This is what happens when the workforce vanishes simultaneously as the ratio of people who do work divided by the people who do not work diminishes. Now multiply this problem by one hundred million and you have a rough idea of where Europe is heading the coming decades.

So here is another version of the figure that shows the projections in percent relative to year 2010. It shows the pressures demography will put on the working-age population as they will in the future be 15% fewer in relation to the total population. Much fewer workers per non-working person, harshly speaking. And the size of the total workforce will decline by more than 20%. Is there anybody who thinks that the debts caused by 500 million people in working-age will be easier to repay when that number falls to 400 million?



(Feel free to use this figure for your own purposes, but please do not forget to mention the source, which is this blog.)

Simon Hedlin Larsson

## Pour George Soros, "les dirigeants européens mènent l'Europe à sa perte"

LE MONDE | 18.04.2012 à 15h07 • Mis à jour le 18.04.2012 à 16h22

Par Clément Lacombe et Audrey Tonnelier



De passage à Paris, le financier [George Soros](#) livre ses réflexions sur la crise de la zone euro. Il fustige le poids de la Bundesbank et appelle à un changement [politique](#) radical. Visionnaire pour certains en raison de ses critiques du capitalisme, spéculateur sans scrupules pour d'autres après son raid contre la livre sterling en 1992, il développe ces propos dans son dernier ouvrage, *Le chaos financier mondial* (Presses de la Cité, 215 pages, 18 euros).

### Quel regard portez-vous sur l'élection présidentielle française ?

Je ne vous dirai pas pour qui je voterais si j'étais Français ! Je pense que ce scrutin peut [faire](#) une différence en permettant une inflexion de la politique française, quel que soit le candidat élu. La [France](#) est dans une situation précaire : le marché du travail doit être assoupli, l'âge du départ à la retraite encore relevé, comme en [Allemagne](#) qui reste un modèle sur ce point. La France est vraiment en retard.

Cela dit, la politique européenne reste clairement entre les mains de l'[Allemagne](#). Si [François Hollande](#) est élu, il lui sera difficile de s'éloigner de la ligne allemande. Une remise en cause de l'orthodoxie financière pourrait [exposer](#) le pays à une attaque des marchés.

### Etes-vous inquiet de la situation actuelle de la zone euro ?

Je crains que la politique des dirigeants actuels ne mène à un désastre. L'euro menace de détruire l'[Union européenne](#) et avec les meilleures intentions, les dirigeants sont en train de [mener](#) l'[Europe](#) à sa perte en essayant de préserver et d'[imposer](#) des règles inappropriées. Et ceux qui jugent la situation intolérable sont désormais tentés par une position antieuropéenne.

Même si l'euro survit, l'[Europe](#) a devant elle une période de grandes difficultés. Elle pourrait être similaire à ce qui est arrivé à l'Amérique latine après la crise de 1982 - une décennie perdue - ou au [Japon](#), qui voit la croissance [stagner](#) depuis vingt-cinq ans. Ces pays ont tout de même survécu, mais l'Union européenne n'est pas un pays et je crains qu'elle n'y survive pas.

### A quelles règles inappropriées faites-vous référence ?

Les traités de Maastricht et le traité de Lisbonne ont donné de profonds défauts à l'euro. Le premier est connu de longue date : il n'y a pas de Trésor commun, permettant d'[emprunter](#) au niveau européen. Mais surtout, et les dirigeants en étaient moins conscients, l'introduction de l'euro a créé de la divergence au lieu d'[instaurer](#) de la convergence.

La crise ayant démarré en 2008 a engendré des situations d'endettement et de déficit très éloignées des critères de Maastricht. Les pays les plus fragiles de la zone euro ont découvert qu'ils sont dans une situation de pays du tiers monde, comme s'ils étaient endettés dans une monnaie étrangère. Avec à la clé

de réels risques de défaut. [Essayer](#) de [faire respecter](#) des règles qui n'ont pas fonctionné n'a fait [empirer](#) la crise. Malheureusement, les autorités ne le comprennent pas. Elles font trop peu, trop tard et la crise s'amplifie. Pour la première fois, il est désormais possible que l'euro éclate.

### **L'action de la BCE trouve-t-elle grâce à vos yeux ?**

Mario Draghi a lancé une mesure hors du commun avec les 1 000 milliards de liquidités injectés dans le système à travers ses prêts à trois ans. Mais les effets de cette opération ont été cassés par la contre-attaque menée par la Bundesbank [la banque centrale allemande]. Vu l'augmentation de la taille du bilan de la BCE, la Bundesbank s'est aperçu qu'elle encourait de lourdes pertes si jamais l'euro venait à éclater et s'oppose donc à la poursuite de cette politique afin de se protéger. Espérons que cela ne soit pas une prophétie auto-réalisatrice...

### **Quelles sont vos pistes pour [sauver](#) la zone euro ?**

La crise peut être stoppée à tout moment. Mais il faut pour cela que les autorités réalisent qu'à situation extraordinaire, il faut des réponses extraordinaires, "out of the box" ("hors de la boîte"). Mais les règles ont besoin d'être changées pour être sûr que le système ne ressorte pas de sa boîte.

Une proposition radicale serait de créer une holding à travers la BCE, où les Etats transféreraient 2 000 à 3 000 milliards d'euros d'obligations et n'auraient plus à [payer](#) d'intérêt. Ce qui donnerait une bouffée d'air à certains pays fragiles : l'[Italie](#) n'aurait plus besoin d'un excédent primaire s'élevant à 3 % du produit intérieur brut pour réduire sa dette. Il faudrait également un agenda de croissance pour la zone euro. Il est impossible de réduire la dette en faisant [plonger](#) la croissance économique.

### **La [Grèce](#) est-elle condamnée à sortie de l'euro ? L'[Espagne](#) et l'[Italie](#) doivent-elles être aidées ?**

La Grèce a peut-être intérêt à [quitter](#) l'euro, car sa situation semble désormais au-delà de ce qui est réparable. L'[Espagne](#), elle, est en train d'être poussée dans la situation de la [Grèce](#). Le gouvernement de Mariano Rajoy savait sa tâche impossible, il avait demandé à Bruxelles d'étaler dans le temps la réduction de son déficit, mais Bruxelles n'a pas voulu, et aujourd'hui les marchés punissent l'Espagne d'[avoir](#) révélé ses faiblesses. Quant à l'Italie, Mario Monti mène les bonnes réformes, mais il commence à [perdre](#) le soutien de ses concitoyens.

### **Pourquoi les dirigeants européens n'agissent-ils pas ?**

Le problème est en Allemagne, car l'opinion publique fait confiance à la Bundesbank. Cette dernière représente un des plus grands succès du pays, elle lui a permis d'[avoir](#) une monnaie forte. La Bundesbank domine la politique européenne, mais elle mène une action bonne pour l'Allemagne, pas pour l'Europe. Car l'Allemagne est un pays florissant, il bénéficie de la [crise de l'euro](#), du taux de change bas de l'euro par rapport à la force de son économie, et de taux d'intérêt très bas pour [financer](#) sa dette.

Ce n'est pas une raison pour ne pas [regarder](#) certains problèmes en face, pour [trouver](#) des excuses à la Grèce, pour ne pas [mener](#) en France des réformes structurelles comme celles ayant été prises par le passé en Allemagne. Ces réformes ne sont cependant pas suffisantes. L'Allemagne les a introduites quand le reste de l'Europe était dans un cycle de croissance, tandis que les autres pays européens les mènent dans une conjoncture mondiale déprimée.

### **Vous avez longtemps spéculé sur les monnaies. Si c'était à refaire, seriez-vous prêt à [parier](#) contre l'euro ?**

Je suis désormais à la retraite, et mon fonds Quantum ne possède pas de position en euro. Mais tant qu'il n'y a pas de changement parmi les dirigeants européens, si je devais [investir](#), je parierais contre l'euro. Ou en tout cas, je ne miserais pas dessus.

**Certains pays voient [monter](#) l'extrême-droite. Cela vous inquiète-t-il ?**

C'est ce qui me dérange le plus : la recherche de solutions nationales prend de plus en plus d'ampleur, ce qui peut détruire l'Union européenne. L'Europe a des problèmes très sérieux, mais il faut y [trouver](#) une solution européenne.

**Comment jugez-vous la santé du secteur bancaire européen ?**

La situation reste très sérieuse, car liée à la crise des dettes souveraines. La recapitalisation des banques doit se [poursuivre](#), et en cela le Mécanisme européen de stabilité (le nouveau fonds d'[aide](#) permanent de la zone euro) peut être utile. Il faut surtout [introduire](#) un vrai contrôle européen sur les banques, car il y a trop de relations incestueuses entre les banques et les gouvernements nationaux. Tout particulièrement en France, avec les "*inspecteurs des finances*" (en français dans le texte.)

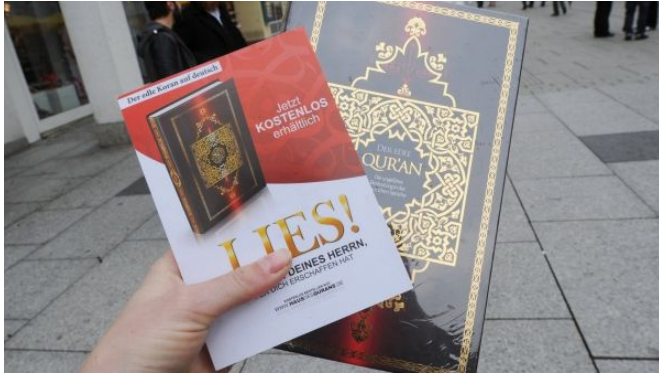
Clément Lacombe et Audrey Tonnelier



## Der Einfluss der Salafisten Demokratie ist das Gegenteil von Islam

FAZ 17.04.2012 · Das Weltbild der Salafisten ist steinalt - älter als die Fußgängerzonen, in denen sie den Koran verteilen. Dort machen sie es sich leicht: Ihr politisches Programm ist die Zuspitzung auf Himmel und Hölle.

Von Necla Kelek



© dpa Salafisten fälschen den Islam: Wir sollten es uns nicht zu einfach machen und glauben, dass der Initiator der Aktion ein Einzelgänger sei

Im Januar dieses Jahres war ich in Tunis, um mit Frauen über ihre Lage nach der Revolution zu sprechen. Der große Aufreger vor Ort war die Besetzung der Manouba-Universität durch Salafisten. Auf dem außerhalb der Stadt gelegenen, von Orangenplantagen gesäumten Campus der sprachwissenschaftlichen Fakultät werden etwa achttausend junge Leute zu Sprachlehrern ausgebildet. Auf dem Weg dahin trafen wir einige Kopftuch und Niqab tragende Studentinnen, die seit sechs Wochen nicht studieren konnten, weil der Lehrbetrieb wegen der Besetzung eingestellt war. Sie sympathisierten mit den Besetzern, fürchteten aber, dass ihnen das Studienjahr nicht anerkannt wird.

Der Rektor war von den Demonstranten in seinem Büro eingeschlossen worden. Da ihm niemand geholfen hatte, stoppte er im November kurzerhand den Lehrbetrieb. Ich erwartete eine große Gruppe von Besetzern. Aber als wir am 5. Januar auf den Campus kamen, waren weder Studenten noch Demonstranten oder auch nur ein Polizist zu sehen. Die jungen Frauen führten uns zum Rektorat, einem einstöckigen Gebäude. Dort saßen sechs junge Männer auf ihren Schlafsäcken im Foyer vor dem Büro des Rektors - das waren die Besetzer.

### Gehört der Vollschieier dazu?

Ich fragte, was sie mit ihrer Aktion bezweckten. „Wir wollen“, sagte ihr Sprecher, „dass unsere Frauen nach den Regeln unserer Religion studieren können.“ „Die wären?“ „Ihnen muss erlaubt sein, in islamischer Kleidung zu studieren und Prüfungen abzulegen.“ „Mit dem Niqab, dem Vollschieier?“ „Ja, das ist die Kleidung, die uns der Islam vorschreibt.“

„Aber dann kann man doch gar nicht erkennen, wer einem gegenüber sitzt und wer die Prüfung ablegt“, wandte ich ein, um die praktischen Probleme der Identifizierung bei Prüfungen anzusprechen. „In Oxford darf man auch Burka tragen. Wir beanspruchen Minderheitenschutz. Es ist unsere Freiheit. Die Zeit der Unterdrückung ist vorbei“, erwiderte der Sprecher der Besetzer.

„Du kannst mich nicht befreien, wenn du mir meine Rechte nimmst“ stand auf einem Plakat im Unifoyer, das eine verschleierte Frau zeigte. Die Islamisten fühlen sich befreit, weil sie unter Ben Ali verfolgt wurden und jetzt keiner Kontrolle mehr unterliegen. Sie reden von Würde und verkünden, die westliche Freiheit sei nur Willkür und Korruption. Als Beweis führen sie ihre eigene Armut und Frömmigkeit an.

Sie sagen, ihre Religion sei der wortgetreue Islam und dessen Gesetz die Scharia. Diese interpretieren sie als Allahs Gebot, das, wie auch das islamistische Vergeltungsprinzip, das Familienrecht und das islamische Strafrecht, über den von Menschen gemachten steht.

## **Die Karikatur einer Weltregion**

Szenenwechsel: In Brüssel wird nach einem Bericht von CBN im Jahr 2030 die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung Muslime sein. Schon heute agitiert eine Salafistengruppe unter dem Namen „Sharia4Belgium“ für die Einführung islamischen Regeln. Ihr Sprecher Abu Imran sagt offen, worum es der Gruppe geht: „Demokratie ist das Gegenteil von Islam. Allah sagt, was erlaubt und was verboten ist.“ Und weiter: „Ein demokratischer Muslim ist so absurd wie anzunehmen, es gäbe christliche Juden.“ Auch in solchen Auffassungen unterscheiden sich die Salafisten grundlegend von anderen Muslimen und moderaten islamischen Parteien, die zwar auch die Scharia wollen, aber nicht als juristische Kategorie. Die Salafisten fälschen den Islam, indem sie ihn auf eine Ideologie reduzieren, in der den Gläubigen unbedingter Gehorsam abverlangt wird. Das dem siebten Jahrhundert entlehnte Weltbild dieser Vereinfacher ist die Karikatur einer Weltreligion; die Zuspitzung auf die Frage Himmel oder Hölle ist ihr politisches Programm.

Auch die Koranverteiler in deutschen Fußgängerzonen argumentieren nach diesem schlichten Muster. Wir sollten es uns darum nicht zu einfach machen und glauben, dies alles geschehe zufällig und der Initiator der Aktion sei ein Einzelgänger. Denselben Argumentationsmustern und Typen bin ich auf meiner Reise auch in Luxor, in Kairouan oder in Marrakesch begegnet. Ganz so, als hätten alle dieselbe Koranschule in Riad besucht.

## **Religionsfreiheit gegen Meinungsfreiheit**

Überall und teilweise mit Erfolg versuchen die mit Petrodollars finanzierten Salafisten ihre immergleiche Strategie durchzusetzen, öffentliche Plätze zu besetzen, als Freiheitskämpfer, Moralapostel und die wahren Gläubigen wahrgenommen zu werden. In Ägypten wurde die „Partei des Lichts“, wie sie sich dort nennen, mit fast dreißig Prozent ins Parlament gewählt, in Tunesien besetzen sie Universitäten und Moscheen und predigen im Parlament, in Marrakesch rasen sie mit Mopeds und „Allah-Akbar“ Rufen durch die Medina, bei uns beten sie öffentlich und auf Youtube.

Theologisch betrachtet sind diese Islamisten ein mittelalterlicher Scherz, Scheinheilige. Optisch eher Islampunks mit Käppi und Zauselbart, sind sie jedoch so ernst zu nehmen wie der schwarze Block. Reaktionäre glänzen selten durch intellektuelle Leistungen, sondern meist durch ihre Aggressivität, Dreistigkeit und die schlichte, ahistorische Freund-oder-Feind-Weltsicht.

Wie reagieren die hiesigen Medien und die Öffentlichkeit? Zunächst einmal hilflos. Die Tagesschau zeigt ältere Damen, die von freundlichen Männern mit Strickkäppis Bücher entgegennehmen, man verbreitet die Legende von angeblich 25 Millionen Gratis-Koranexemplaren, die verteilt werden sollen. Die Politiker wägen Religionsfreiheit gegen Meinungsfreiheit ab und hoffen, das nichts passiert.

## **Die Scharia darf nicht als Familiengesetz gelten**

„Über die Wichtigkeit der Lektüre des Koran für alle (...) besteht kein Zweifel“, erklärt der Koordinierungsrat der Muslime (KRM) zu der Koranverteiler-Aktion. Man erhoffe sich, dass das heilige Buch dadurch nicht „instrumentalisiert“ wird. Ali Kizilkaya, der Sprecher des KRM sieht die Aktion „nicht als Grund zur Beunruhigung“, und der Generalsekretär des Zentralrats der Muslime, Ayman Mayzek, hält die Verteilung des Korans „grundsätzlich“ für eine „vielversprechende Tat“, begründete dies mit Weisheit, die dem Koran innewohne, und der Einladung zum Dialog. Keine Empörung und kaum Hinweise auf die antidemokratischen Ziele dieser Sektierer, keine Auseinandersetzung mit deren religiösem Eifer, sondern nur die Sorge um ein weiteres „belastendes Diskussionsfeld“.

Das Bild des Islam kann sich nur verbessern, wenn die Muslime und ihre Verbände aktiv die Religionsfreiheit gegen solchen Missbrauch verteidigen. Wenn sie die demokratischen Rechte nicht nur zu ihrem Schutz beanspruchen. Dazu gehört es, sich offen von der politischen Ideologie der Islamisten abzugrenzen. Die Muslime selbst müssen in das von Fundamentalisten und Terroristen besetzte Herz der Finsternis ihrer Religion blicken und sich als wehrhafte Demokraten positionieren.

Sie könnten zum Beispiel mit einer Erklärung auf der Islamkonferenz in dieser Woche zeigen, dass sie die salafistische Auffassung ablehnen, dass die Scharia nicht als Straf- und Familiengesetz gelten darf und das die Gefahr des Fundamentalismus in den eigenen Reihen lauert.

In Tunis fand sich kein Student, kein Professor, weder Politiker noch Imam, um den Salafisten entgegen zutreten. Alle hatten Angst, sich mit ihnen anzulegen - zum einen, weil sie die „Ungläubigen“ tatsächlich bedrohen und zum anderen, weil niemand als Feind der neuen Freiheit gelten möchte. Erst als zweihundert französische Universitäten die Besetzung der Manouba-Universität als Meinungsterror und Akt gegen die Freiheit der Wissenschaft ächteten, reagierte das von der islamistischen En-Nahda-Partei geführte Bildungsministerium und beendete die vorher mit Wohlwollen geduldete Besetzung. Es war nicht viel mehr als ein Streifenwagen nötig. Am nächsten Tag kamen die Studentinnen wieder zum Studieren an die Universität. Einige mit Niqab.

Quelle: F.A.Z.

## L'antilibéralisme, le seul point d'accord entre les dix candidats

LE MONDE | 12.04.2012 à 15h06

Par Mathieu Laine, directeur du cabinet de conseil en stratégie Altermind

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Le libéralisme, on le sait, n'est pas aimé en [France](#). L'antilibéralisme est d'ailleurs le seul point d'accord des dix candidats à l'élection présidentielle ! Personne n'ose s'y [risquer](#) de peur d'en [subir](#) les foudres électorales. Les libéraux de l'école américaine du Public Choice, l'économiste James Buchanan en tête, l'avaient clairement expliqué : les politiques se comportent rationnellement sur le marché des voix et, sondages à l'appui, tentent de [flatter](#) et de répondre à l'opinion dominante plus que de la [faire](#) évoluer. Quand on sait qu'à peine 30 % des Français croient aux vertus de l'économie de marché, on ne peut en [vouloir](#) à nos dirigeants de tous [parier](#) sur l'option constructiviste...

Cette campagne fait cependant figure d'exception. Non seulement par l'unanimité et la violence de son hostilité aux [idées](#) libérales, mais également parce qu'il n'y a guère plus qu'en France que l'on raisonne encore sur le seul axe "droite-gauche" et non sur une opposition "croyance dans l'Etat-confiance dans l'individu". Nos représentants politiques, tous bords confondus, demeurent en effet rivés aux anciennes recettes, aux vieilles querelles, et rivalisent, tous, de promesses d'interventions publiques quand le reste du monde teste des solutions nouvelles.

C'est dans la notion même d'ordre social que l'on perçoit la différence entre les libéraux et ses opposants. A droite comme à gauche, l'ordre doit être construit et imposé. Soit parce qu'il existe une hiérarchie naturelle qu'il faut [respecter](#) (droite), soit parce les hommes ne peuvent pas être laissés à eux-mêmes sous peine de pérenniser les inégalités et les injustices du passé (gauche). Le libéral, lui, voit l'ordre [social](#) ni de façon tribale ni de façon conflictuelle mais comme le résultat spontané des actions humaines.

Alors que les autres courants de pensée entendent [changer](#) l'homme, il souhaite, lui, le [respecter](#) et dénonce les conséquences néfastes des excès de l'interventionnisme, notamment le fameux *"too big to fail"* ("trop gros pour [faire](#) faillite") suivi du terrifiant *"too public to fail"*, qui ont institutionnalisé l'irresponsabilité et nous ont poussés dans la crise. Le libéralisme n'en est pas pour autant un catéchisme, car il déduit son modèle sociétal d'une compréhension fine et vérifiable de la façon dont l'homme agit.

Face à cela, la France, avec ses 54 % de dépenses publiques, contre 43 % en moyenne parmi les pays membres de l'OCDE, semble *"en plein déni"*, comme le titrait récemment et très justement l'hebdomadaire *The Economist*... Ailleurs, pourtant, tout se met en place : le premier ministre britannique, [David Cameron](#), vient en effet d'[engager](#), en parallèle de sa [politique](#) de réduction drastique des dépenses publiques, un vaste plan de diminution de la pression fiscale pour [favoriser](#) l'esprit d'entreprise et d'innovation, la croissance et l'emploi.

Le président du conseil italien, [Mario Monti](#), s'attaque aux privilèges et entreprend de flexibiliser fortement le marché du travail pour recréer des incitations à l'embauche. De nombreux pays émergents ont compris qu'en accroissant le degré de liberté, c'est tout un mouvement civilisationnel qui se mettait en place.

En France, à l'inverse, les plus bas instincts sont flattés. L'envie et la peur sont les deux mamelles auxquelles viennent s'[abreuver](#) les marchands de protections. Des 75 % délibérément punitifs de [François Hollande](#) aux ambitions protectionnistes de [Nicolas Sarkozy](#), sans [oublier les débats](#) à mille lieues des

exigences contemporaines sur la viande halal ou l'espace Schengen, les vrais sujets sont évacués et la démagogie vit ses plus belles heures.

Pourtant, la pensée libérale (ou plutôt les pensées libérales, car le libéralisme se subdivise en de multiples familles, qu'il est urgent de connaître pour éviter les idées reçues), qui fait [reposer](#) les relations sociales sur le primat de la liberté individuelle, et donc sur la responsabilité, a fait largement ses preuves et constitue un réservoir d'idées et d'innovations pertinentes pour qui veut, notamment en économie ouverte, [relancer](#) un pays, recréer de la croissance, [restaurer](#) le plein-emploi et [assurer](#) l'épanouissement humain.

La littérature économique sur le développement montre, par exemple, que la qualité des institutions, surtout en ce qui concerne la protection du droit de propriété et la protection contre la prédation publique (taxation excessive, privilèges commerciaux, etc.), est le facteur le plus important dans le développement des pays occidentaux dans les 250 dernières années. Dans le même esprit, l'Index of [Economic Freedom](#) révèle la corrélation existant entre la liberté économique et le revenu par habitant. Moins il y a de liberté, plus il y a de pauvreté, viennent [expliquer](#) les libéraux, qui déplorent, comme [Terra Nova](#), la croissance plus qu'inquiétante des outsiders d'un système à bout de souffle.

*"Il n'est rien de plus fécond que l'art d'être libre, mais il n'est rien de plus dur que l'apprentissage de la liberté."* La prophétie de Tocqueville n'a jamais été aussi vraie dans un pays où l'égalitarisme et l'obsession sécuritaire priment sur la liberté et où "entrepreneur" semble être devenu un gros mot. La véritable alternance est pourtant libérale. Sans elle, le mal de crâne du futur locataire de l'Elysée n'en sera que plus redoutable.

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[Mathieu Laine](#) enseigne le droit et la philosophie politique à [Sciences Po](#) et a publié le *Dictionnaire du libéralisme* dont il a assuré la direction (Larousse, 720 p., 28,50 €).

Mathieu Laine, directeur du cabinet de conseil en stratégie Altermind

## Debatte ums Betreuungsgeld: Wie soll der Staat die Kinder fördern?

17.04.2012 · Fast 200 Milliarden Euro gibt Deutschland jedes Jahr für die Familien aus. Doch längst nicht alles landet an der richtigen Stelle. Aber wer profitiert von welcher Maßnahme, und was ist das Beste für die Kinder? Eine Analyse von fünf Betreuungsmodellen

Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung, von Patrick Bernau



Monat für Monat 150 Euro. So viel will die Bundesregierung künftig Eltern zahlen, die sich zu Hause um ihre Kinder kümmern. Wer vor dem dritten Geburtstag des Kindes keine staatlich bezuschusste Betreuung in Anspruch nimmt, sondern stattdessen nicht arbeitet, der soll in dieser Zeit stattdessen das Geld vom Staat überwiesen bekommen.

Im nächsten Jahr soll es losgehen - aber seit Monaten melden sich immer wieder Kritiker zu Wort, die den Zuschuss nicht bezahlen möchten, zuletzt 23 Abgeordnete der CDU in einem gemeinsamen Brief.

Es ist ein Thema, um das Deutschland immer wieder heftig streiten kann. Wie viel Geld sollen Familien bekommen? Bekommen sie schon genug, oder reicht es noch nicht? Und wenn der Staat Geld zahlt, soll er bestimmte Familienmodelle fördern - und wenn ja, welche?

Sicher ist: Die Familien in Deutschland bekommen schon zig Milliarden vom Staat. Das Statistische Bundesamt hat errechnet, dass Paare mit Kindern im Familienalter zwischen 35 und 45 Jahren durchschnittlich ein Viertel weniger an Steuern bezahlen als kinderlose Paare im gleichen Alter - dafür bekommen sie mehr als den doppelten Betrag an staatlichen Geldleistungen, das Kindergeld macht sich schnell bemerkbar. Doch das ist noch nicht alles. Längst nicht alle Förderungen des Staates fließen ja in Form von Geld. Die öffentlichen Kassen bezuschussen zudem Kindergärten und finanzieren Schulen, sie begleichen Kinderarzt-Rechnungen und bauen Spielplätze.

### 152 Fördermaßnahmen für Familien

Eine erste, grobe Übersicht des Familienministeriums nennt 8 Fördermaßnahmen für die Ehe und 152 unterschiedliche für Familien, die insgesamt 195 Milliarden Euro im Jahr ausmachen - fast 14.000 Euro für jeden Deutschen bis 18 Jahre.

Selbst dabei ist noch längst nicht alles berücksichtigt. Die Leistungen fallen an so vielen unterschiedlichen Stellen an, dass noch niemand einen umfassenden Überblick geschafft hat. Seit Jahren will das Familienministerium einen vorlegen, jetzt ist der Bericht für 2013 angekündigt.

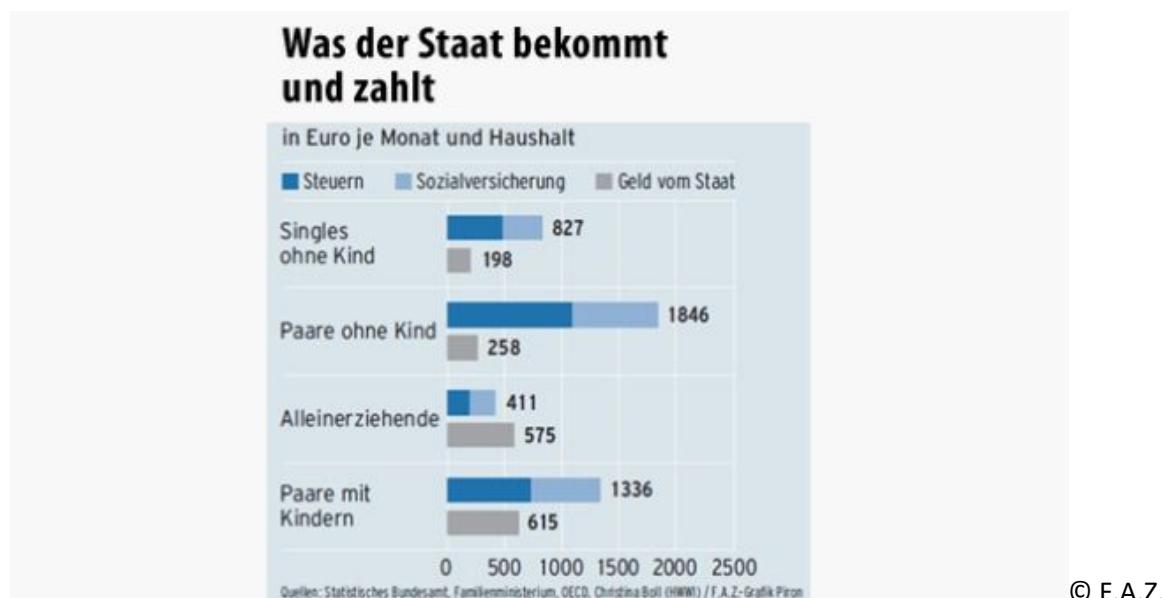
### Der Staat steckt Geld in die Schulen

Die Industrieländer-Organisation OECD hat ihrerseits einige Leistungen für Familien und Kinder zusammengezählt. Ihre Ergebnisse zeigen deutlich: Das meiste Geld, das der Staat für Kinder ausgibt,

geht in die Bildung, vor allem in Schulen. Bis zu 50 Prozent des mittleren Haushaltseinkommens gibt der Staat pro Kind aus - am meisten in den Jahren zwischen 11 und 17. Dabei ist schon seit einer ganzen Weile klar: Die wichtigsten Weichen für das Schicksal eines Kindes werden in den ersten Lebensjahren gestellt. „Die frühen Jahre sind eine große Chance. Hier werden die Fähigkeiten geschaffen, die das Leben und Lernen später erleichtern“, sagt der Nobelpreisträger und Bildungsökonom James Heckman aus Chicago. „Es ist besser, eine gute Basis zu schaffen, als später korrigieren zu müssen.“ Umso wichtiger ist es, sich über die Betreuung in den ersten Jahren Gedanken zu machen. Genau diese Jahre betrifft der Streit ums Betreuungsgeld. Ob die Familien noch mehr Geld brauchen, ist ohnehin umstritten. Ob es gut ist, irgendwelche Anreize für bestimmte Betreuungsformen zu schaffen, noch mehr - zumal in diesem Fall: „Der Staat fördert die Kinderbetreuung und will gleichzeitig eine andere Förderung dafür einführen, dass die Eltern die geförderte Kinderbetreuung nicht in Anspruch nehmen“, sagt Axel Plünnecke, Bildungsexperte beim Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft in Köln.

## Welches Familienmodell fördern?

Und selbst wenn der Staat sich in diese Entscheidung einmischen möchte, ist die Frage, welches Familienmodell er fördern sollte. Unterschiedliche Familienmodelle haben unterschiedliche Kosten und Nutzen - für die Eltern sowieso, aber auch für den Staatshaushalt und für das Ziel, Kindern unabhängig vom Elternhaus möglichst gleiche Startchancen zu geben.



Die Betreuung zu Hause gilt unter Experten am Ende als teuer und schlecht vereinbar mit dem Ziel, Chancengerechtigkeit herzustellen. Kindern von gebildeten Eltern, die sich mit ihrem Kind beschäftigen, geht es zu Hause nämlich deutlich besser als Kindern, denen die Eltern wenig Anregung zukommen lassen können oder wollen.

## Fülle an neuen Anregungen außerhalb der Familie

In den ersten Fällen sind die Unterschiede zwischen der Betreuung zu Hause und in der Krippe klein - Hinweise deuten darauf, dass die Krippe langfristig einen kleinen Vorteil bringt, aber der ist so klein, dass er nach wie vor nicht eindeutig ist.

Doch für die Kinder, die es zu Hause schwer haben, bringt eine Betreuung außerhalb der Familie eine Fülle an neuen Anregungen, so dass das ihre Situation sehr oft verbessert. In Pilotprojekten wird zudem ein anderer Ansatz getestet: Die Eltern in der Kindererziehung zu schulen. [In unserem interaktiven Flash](#) werden fünf unterschiedliche Betreuungsmodelle analysiert.

Quelle: F.A.S.

## Presidential Election in France Raises New Concerns for Investors

By [LIZ ALDERMAN](#)

PARIS — To the list of worries about the euro zone, add one in bold: the fate of France as it heads into the first round of a closely contested presidential election this weekend.

After a long stretch in which President [Nicolas Sarkozy](#) grappled with [the euro](#) crisis, investors are now wrestling with the implications of a potential victory by the Socialist candidate, [François Hollande](#). Mr. Hollande's pledges of higher taxes on the rich, and higher government spending, are luring voters disenchanted by the austerity medicine Mr. Sarkozy has administered in hopes of protecting France from financial contagion.

Many investors, though, are questioning what a government run by Mr. Hollande would mean for France's economic competitiveness and its ability to keep clear of the financial turmoil that has once again lifted the borrowing costs of two other big euro zone countries, Spain and Italy.

A surprisingly successful bond auction by Spain on Tuesday at least temporarily buoyed the financial markets in Europe and the United States. But the underlying concerns for Spain and the region have not gone away. And with polls showing Mr. Hollande as at least an even bet to oust Mr. Sarkozy, a fog of financial uncertainty has enveloped France, Europe's biggest economy after Germany.

"If you combine an election of François Hollande with a worsening economic situation, no improvement in Spain, and a possible new downgrade of France by the ratings agencies, there is a high likelihood" that France's borrowing costs will also rise, said Evariste Lefevre, chief economist at the French investment bank Natixis in New York.

Such sentiments are viewed warily by many French voters, and Mr. Sarkozy's opponents, who are exasperated by what they see as a crass effort by financial players to browbeat France into accepting more of the type of austerity measures that have squeezed growth in Greece, Spain and other troubled euro zone countries.

The German [derivatives](#) exchange, Eurex, ignited a political furor in France when it began trading a futures contract Monday enabling investors to hedge their bets on French government debt. The apparent premise is that France's creditworthiness could slip if the government — whether led by Mr. Sarkozy or Mr. Hollande — backslides on efforts to cut its debt and deficit.

Executives at Eurex said the timing was a mere coincidence. But for the bristling French, there was no ignoring that it came just days before voters head to the polls this weekend to narrow a sprawling field of French candidates down to two, with a final presidential runoff scheduled to take place May 6.

Mr. Hollande blamed the German exchange for encouraging speculation on France's insolvency, and said that if he were elected, he would try to get the new Eurex contracts eliminated.

With the campaign heating up, Mr. Hollande accused Mr. Sarkozy of encouraging market speculation against France by playing up fears that Mr. Hollande's supposed tax-and-spend programs, together with his inexperience in dealing with the financial crisis, could push France's borrowing costs toward levels that would make it harder for the nation to pay down its debt.



France's government debt will near an estimated 90 percent of gross domestic product this year — the fifth highest in Europe and well above Germany's estimated 78 percent, according to the International Monetary Fund.

Mr. Sarkozy, for his part, has not been shy about sounding his own populist notes in counterattacking Mr. Hollande. On Sunday, the president raised eyebrows in financial markets, and in Germany, by telling a rally in Paris that if he were re-elected, he would open a debate on widening the European Central Bank's legal mandate to let it promote growth through monetary stimulus. It is a power that the Federal Reserve in the United States holds, but that is now largely off limits to Europe's central bank, which is supposed to focus mainly on controlling inflation.

Mr. Sarkozy's campaign promise irritated his German allies. A spokesman for Chancellor Angela Merkel publicly reminded the French president that the bank needed to remain independent, and that it was the duty of each euro zone country to manage its own finances.

A central plank of Mr. Hollande's platform revolves around restoring social equilibrium in France, which he says Mr. Sarkozy has upset by giving tax breaks to the wealthy, giving employers greater leeway in hiring and firing, and threatening the sanctity of the 35-hour workweek that an earlier Socialist government put in place.

Mr. Hollande also contends that the cuts to government and social programs made in the name of reducing the budget deficit have hit the working class too hard. Such rhetoric has strong appeal at a time when the country is facing a shallow [recession](#), and unemployment remains above 10 percent, the highest level in more than a decade.

But investors are already alarmed by what they see as an erosion of competitiveness among French companies, a widening current account deficit and declining exports.

As a result, investors say France is drifting away from the "core" of strong European economies that include Germany and the Nordic countries. Instead, it is increasingly being lumped together with the weak large economies of Spain and Italy, along Europe's troubled southern rim.

To turn things around, Mr. Hollande and Mr. Sarkozy agree that France's budget needs to be balanced soon. Mr. Sarkozy says his program would get there by 2016. Mr. Hollande says his would reach the goal by 2017. Both agree to whittle the deficit down to 3 percent of gross domestic product next year from 5.2 percent last year.

But that is where the similarities end. Mr. Sarkozy plans to raise value-added taxes on consumer products. He would continue a program of reducing government employment by replacing only one of every two civil servants who retire. He would also reduce France's financial contribution to the European Union budget and to local authorities, as well as freeze spending on certain portions of France's health care system.

Such pledges do not worry the financial markets as much as Mr. Sarkozy's promises to introduce a minimum tax on large companies, or collect more taxes from income French companies earn abroad.

Mr. Hollande, in contrast, is pledging to increase taxes on the wealthy to pay for significant new spending intended to spur the economy. He promises to raise 29 billion euros (about \$38 billion) in new revenue while lifting spending by 20 billion euros.

A main Hollande plank includes introducing a 75 percent marginal tax rate on individual income above 1 million euros and forgoing the planned increase in the [value-added tax](#). And rather than cut the government payroll, he has pledged to expand it by hiring 60,000 civil servants and teachers. Mr.

Hollande would also reverse changes to the pension system instituted under Mr. Sarkozy, by pushing the retirement age back to 60, from 62.

That platform, Mr. Lefeuvre said, is why many foreign investors are hoping for Mr. Hollande's electoral defeat.

"If he does win, there will be a lot of concern," Mr. Lefeuvre said.

## Debate Grows as Europe Fears Return of a Crisis

By [NICHOLAS KULISH](#)

BERLIN — The [European financial crisis](#) has shown signs of reigniting in recent days, sharpening the debate between the champions of austerity and a growing chorus urging more expansionary policies to promote growth.

Even the traditionally hard-line [International Monetary Fund](#) called on Tuesday for stronger European nations to ease the fiscal brakes by stretching out budget cuts over a longer period. But if that message was intended foremost for Germany, it seemed destined to fall on deaf ears: with two state elections coming up next month, Chancellor Angela Merkel is unlikely to shift her position, popular with voters, against additional help for the economies of struggling European partners.

“We don’t see the need that perhaps other countries see to boost growth through additional increases in expenditures,” said a senior official in the German Finance Ministry, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

“Instead, we see quite clearly, and will remind our partners about their responsibilities from Toronto,” the official said, referring to commitments made at the Group of 20 summit meeting in June 2010, “to cut their deficits in half and stabilize their debt levels.” At the same time, the official said that Germany hoped other countries would join in increasing the International Monetary Fund’s resources to help it combat the crisis.

Politics as much as economics is adding to the sense of uncertainty in Europe. President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, who is trailing the Socialist candidate François Hollande in the polls before the first round of the presidential election on Sunday, has joined his opponent in promoting pro-growth policies. In Greece, nationalist anti-German fringe parties are gaining strength ahead of next month’s parliamentary election.

The German state elections may not directly affect the federal government in Berlin, but they distract from Continent-wide concerns and crisis management while thrusting parochial issues to the forefront. The German government does not have a mandate to share further the burden of the common currency on less competitive economies like those of Greece, Portugal, Ireland and, increasingly, Spain and Italy.

What seems certain, however, is that the crisis will continue to fester until new measures are taken to address its root causes. Borrowing costs for struggling southern European countries like Spain and Italy have begun to rise again as the effect of the European Central Bank’s injection of about \$1.3 trillion in cheap loans into the banking system in December and March has faded much faster than expected. The three-year loans were meant to buy time for struggling governments and financial institutions, but the breathing room appears likely to be measured in months rather than in years.

The recent shift has underscored that there have been no substantive fixes beyond promises by countries to reduce their budget deficits. “It looks like it’s coming back with a vengeance, largely because none of the underlying problems have been solved,” said Philip Whyte, a senior research fellow at the Center for European Reform.

Mr. Whyte said that despite two years of crisis management, the fundamental structure of the euro zone remained intact, with lower-productivity economies in the south yoked to higher-productivity economies in the north, which prevents the laggards from competing through a currency devaluation.

“The E.C.B. bought time, but what it ended up doing was simply tightening the link between national banks and their sovereigns,” Mr. Whyte said. “They made the system more vulnerable if markets started losing faith in debt sustainability in countries like Spain.”

Yields on Spain’s 10-year bonds climbed above 6 percent on Monday, though they fell slightly on Tuesday after a successful auction of short-term debt by Spain’s treasury. Spain has emerged as the central test this year after missing its deficit targets as it slips back into recession. The government in Madrid has had a difficult time reining in spending by the 17 regional governments.

A bailout of Spain would be much costlier than one for smaller economies like those of Greece, Portugal or Ireland, testing the resources of the euro zone countries. Many economists, particularly in the United States, have argued that Spain has to stimulate its economy with additional spending if it hopes to return to economic growth, an argument rejected by the German government.

In an interview with the German newspaper Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung on Tuesday, Christine Lagarde, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, said she was concerned about the health of Spanish banks and warned against slashing spending too quickly. It is not a view shared here in the German capital.

In an interview with Reuters on Tuesday, Germany’s finance minister, Wolfgang Schäuble, praised Spain for making difficult economic changes. “You don’t win back trust overnight,” Mr. Schäuble said, adding that Spain was following the right path by cutting spending. German officials have also recommended changes in labor markets as a longer-term strategy to promote growth.

As deficits balloon in countries across Europe, Germany continues to watch its deficits and financing costs fall. In another sign of Germany’s recent strength, the Bundesbank said on Tuesday that the country’s debt had fallen to 81.2 percent of gross domestic product in 2011, compared with 83 percent in 2010. That is still far above precrisis levels: in 2007, German debt was 65.2 percent of the size of the country’s economy.

“The problem with the crisis in Germany is that we know we have a crisis, but we don’t feel it,” said Eckart D. Stratenschulte, a political scientist and the director of the nonprofit European Academy Berlin.

Even as the European Central Bank loans improved market conditions, European leaders, including Ms. Merkel, were clear that they did not believe that the crisis was over. Many in Germany argue that a sense of crisis — and the elevated borrowing costs that come with it — is necessary to end out-of-control spending in the heavily indebted nations and to push through the economic liberalization they need to restore growth.

But the higher borrowing costs and austerity measures cut into growth, critics say, lowering government revenues in a self-defeating downward spiral and leading to higher interest rates and further budget cuts. “It’s concerning that the markets are again running out of patience and driving yields higher,” said Thomas Mayer, chief economist at Deutsche Bank in Frankfurt. “That creates further head winds.”

The I.M.F. on Tuesday raised its forecast for global growth slightly for the year. In Europe, the fund projected recovery in the second half of 2012, except for Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal, where substantial improvement is not expected until next year.

The crisis, Mr. Mayer said, is like “a manic depressive moving between euphoria and worries, and now we’re in the valley of worries again.”

Victor Homola contributed reporting.

NYT April 17, 2012

## No Place to Go but Up in France

By [JOHN VINOCCUR](#)

PARIS — The election in France on Sunday won't decide its next president but will more likely offer a miserable precedent: a success for a "Rejection Front" that combines the bleak compatibility of the extreme left and right.

Notionally at least, with the Left Front and National Fronts scores added together, the beyond-the-mainstream candidates' total share of the vote could beat the individual first-round scores of either President Nicolas Sarkozy or the Socialist, François Hollande.

That doesn't change the near certainty that Marine Le Pen at the far right and Jean-Luc Mélenchon on the left's distant shore get eliminated on April 22 while Hollande and Sarkozy advance to the final round two weeks later.

But if the Rejection Front (my designation) does as well as most polls suggest, France will have legitimized two political currents that spurn serious solutions for France's economic grief, reject civility and common sense and variously propose regression through loony yet authoritarian economics, class warfare, class or racial prejudices, anti-Western instincts, and the politics of endless rage.

Sarkozy and Hollande are each projected to win between 26 and 29 percent of the votes cast in the first round among 10 contenders. That means that if parallel estimates hold for Le Pen (16 to 18 percent) and Mélenchon (around 15), extremism's total beats either mainstream guy.

This isn't a nerdy detail, but a miserable political signpost in an important and usually intelligent country struggling to retain influence in the world.

Mélenchon, who has Communist Party backing, infantilizes the French with promises of an "insurrection" that in the face of the country's pledges of austerity would create 500,000 new places in public nurseries, 200,000 new low-rent apartments per year, total reimbursement of all individual health expenditure and tenured status for 800,000 public service workers now without permanent contracts. It is not clear how the Left Front would handle the costs (the health bill alone is estimated at €40 billion yearly), but Mélenchon has given a hint: confiscation of annual individual income above €360,000.

Mélenchon's world-view goes hand in hand with his economics. He describes the United States as "the world's primary problem" and wants the U.S. Sixth Fleet out of the Mediterranean. More: Hugo Chávez of Venezuela is a hero, the Chinese invasion of Tibet was justified, and Cuba isn't a dictatorship.

In a French political universe where no one need tell a significant percentage of the truth, dealing in fantasy is an easy alternative. The problem with Mélenchon is that his routine is showing it works in 2012 France. As Daniel Cohn-Bendit, the left-wing ecologist politician, has said, "He's succeeded in restoring national nostalgia for old-time class conflict and statist tradition."

While Mélenchon's role in the Rejection Front refuses reality, Marine Le Pen's National Front summons French instincts in the direction of bigotry and spite. Again, it seems to be working.

With less of a growl than her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, she pitches an anti-immigration line of carefully gauged excess meant to shake out votes from the majority of the population, shown by surveys to regard integration as a failure because of a lack of immigrants' effort. Polling illustrates that she is on to

something. Le Monde's lead story on April 10 reported that more 18- to 24-year-olds (26 percent) would vote for her than any other presidential candidate on Sunday.

So who or what to blame for a significant part of France buying into off-the-wall economics and cosmeticized prejudice? An easy rationale would be that, after all, this is the ancient and resilient society that made ironic emblems of its selfish or self-destructive yearnings — “après moi le déluge” or “la nostalgie de la boue.”

Pick Sarkozy and Hollande's triviality instead. They never confronted voters with the perspective of harder times through the reality of France's debt and deficit-reduction obligations, or considered big-bang programs for Muslim immigrants that would link sweeping affirmative action and requirements for their assimilation.

Hollande shied from taking a direct swing at Mélenchon's calls to the streets for fear of not being able to recuperate his voters in the second presidential round. Rather, he seemed to justify the far-left's reflexes with a call for a 75 percent tax rate on income over €1 million.

In turn, Sarkozy's tactics have been to increase the Left Front's vote total and reduce Hollande's in the first round with compliments for Mélenchon like, “I have to say, concerning his comprehension of things having to do with humanity, I have no complaints.” On integration and immigration, Sarkozy the candidate would not condemn the National Front or Le Pen line by name to assure picking up their votes in the May 6 runoff.

Through their complaisant maneuvering, Sarkozy and Hollande have reduced the stature of responsible politics in France and with it given both halves of the Rejection Front enough momentum so that, side by side, they may enter the National Assembly in June legislative elections. Leaving this likely indelible (and repugnant) trace behind, the quality of the French presidential race and runoff round beginning Monday has no place to go but up.

04/17/2012

**SPIEGEL ONLINE**

## Big Promises and Bigger Illusions

# Personalities Trump Policies in French Presidential Campaign

By Mathieu von Rohr in Paris

French voters go to the polls for the first round of the presidential election on Sunday. So far, it's been a strange campaign in which personalities have played a bigger role than the country's troubled economy. The French media have focused primarily on the fate of President Nicolas Sarkozy -- a fate which remains uncertain.

Jacques Cheminade, a French presidential candidate for the Lyndon LaRouche-affiliated Solidarity and Progress Party, says that if he is elected he will colonize Mars. He also sees no problem in comparing Barack Obama with Adolf Hitler.

Four million French viewers tuned in last Thursday to see Cheminade appear on a special election edition of "*Des paroles et des actes*" ("Words and Actions"), a political TV show on the public network France 2. Later that evening, it was Trotskyite Nathalie Arthaud's turn to present her party platform. Arthaud wants to abolish the free market economy, and sings the praises of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Cheminade and Arthaud are among the fringe candidates in the first round of the presidential elections on April 22. They each receive roughly half a percent of the vote in recent opinion polls. But they have obtained the requisite 500 signatures from elected officials needed to run for president, placing them among the 10 official candidates. Furthermore, TV stations are legally required to give them equal airtime -- precisely the same amount granted to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, who was also only allowed to speak for 16 minutes that evening on "*Des paroles et des actes*."

The winner of the French election won't be known until May 6, when the two top candidates face each other in a runoff election. It will presumably be a contest between Sarkozy and his challenger from the Socialist Party, François Hollande.

### Hopeless Fringe Candidates

It's a strange election campaign that is entering its final phase these days in France. On the surface, at least, French presidential elections may have similarities with their American counterparts, where two politicians face off in a duel for power.

But there's also something rather old-fashioned about the French version. Most of the candidates write statesman-like books that people actually buy -- and when they appear on TV, they grandly announce that their appearance is a *rendezvous* with the voters. One of the peculiarities of this election is the current lineup of hopeless fringe candidates, who the French call *les petits candidats*. They are the tolerated court jesters in a choreographed show, which ultimately results in the people electing a new king.

In this election year, we should be particularly grateful for the outsiders. They lend color to an election campaign that would otherwise be somewhat depressing. On the one hand, there is an incumbent whom the majority of French voters find distasteful -- and who is doing everything in his power to convince them that he is the only one who can lead the country.

On the other hand, there is the Socialist candidate Hollande, who has been outdistancing his rival in head-to-head matchups for months and enjoys a reputation as a solid pragmatist, yet has failed to capture the hearts of voters with his pencil-pusher charm. Surveys show that two-thirds of Hollande's supporters are primarily interested in thwarting Sarkozy's bid for reelection.

In short, the French have the choice between a man they no longer want and a man they don't really want.

### **A Post-Election Hangover**

The sense of paralysis that characterizes this election campaign has much to do with a largely unspoken truth: No matter who wins, within just a matter of days after the election all of the candidates' political programs will prove useless. On May 7, after the post-election celebration, the French will wake up with a hangover.

Economically speaking, France is a [sick country](#). It has a national debt that is running at 90 percent of gross domestic product (GDP), and the country hasn't had a balanced budget since 1974. France has the highest public spending ratio of the euro zone: 57 percent of its economic output depends on life support from the government. Unemployment is at 10 percent and there is an entire generation of immigrant children who are growing up in ghetto-like suburbs and have little contact with the labor market.

The country has already lost its triple-A credit rating from Standard & Poor's, and many experts and politicians fear that the financial markets could next attack the second-largest economy in the euro zone. Although France's situation is not remotely comparable with that of Greece or Spain, the country has been hard hit and rising interest rates on its sovereign bonds would significantly exacerbate the euro crisis.

During the election campaign, little has been said about the country's dramatic situation -- particularly with regard to the austerity measures that would be necessary to resolve France's problems. While government auditors are calling on France to save €100 billion (\$131 billion) over the next five years, Hollande has announced new expenditures of €20 billion and, in the traditional socialist manner, would rather increase tax revenues than reduce public spending. Although Sarkozy says that he intends to make cutbacks, he has already missed that opportunity over the past five years in office.

### **Image of a Powerful France**

Instead of addressing these issues, the candidates are trying to woo voters with the familiar image of a powerful France that can flex its political muscle across Europe. Hollande plans to renegotiate the European fiscal pact that has been signed by 25 countries. Sarkozy has threatened to withdraw from the Schengen Agreement unless more is done to stop illegal immigration. This reflects France's longing for a greatness that is jeopardized by precisely the economic weaknesses that the candidates appear virtually powerless to overcome.

No one better exemplifies the unrealistic proposals being tossed around in this election campaign than left-wing populist candidate Jean-Luc Mélenchon. Opinion polls show that Mélenchon, representing the Left Front, is poised to receive up to 17 percent of the vote during the first round. Thanks to Mélenchon's success among left-wing voters, Hollande could end up trailing Sarkozy on Sunday's first round of voting.

Mélenchon wants to raise the minimum monthly wage to €1,700 -- and he's calling for a 100-percent tax on all personal income above €360,000. What's more, he says that France should withdraw from NATO. Mélenchon is a charismatic speaker. At his campaign rallies -- held at places like the Place de la Bastille in Paris -- tens of thousands of supporters wave red flags and sing the left-wing anthem "The Internationale."

His success has made him into something of a pop star. The YouTube hit of the past few days has been a spoof pop video of a scantily-clad blonde singing: "Take power over me, Jean-Luc."



The Left Front's candidate is the only surprise in this election campaign, and could even edge out right-wing populist Marine Le Pen to take third place in the first round. One year ago, Le Pen was ahead of the president in the opinion polls -- but, as in 2007, Sarkozy has [adopted](#) portions of her political platforms, allowing him to secure the support of many right-wing voters.

### **Asking Tough Questions**

The second star of this election campaign is not a candidate, but a bald business journalist named François Lenglet. He achieved cult status because, during the special election editions of "*Des paroles et des actes*," he demonstrated to all of the candidates how preposterous their economic proposals were -- often with the help of charts and diagrams. Granted, this didn't put a dent in their delusions of economic grandeur, but it at least added some sense of reality.

Many candidates felt insulted. They are used to being fawned over by French journalists during interviews. Critical journalism, as practiced by Lenglet, is rarely seen on television. As for the print media, French newspapers are divided into two political camps: The conservative *Le Figaro* defends the government's policies and attacks Hollande on a daily basis, while the left-wing *Libération* is campaigning for Hollande.

Over the past few months, most French media have focused mainly on the question of whether Sarkozy can manage to get reelected. One week before the first round of voting, no conclusive answer has emerged, but the likelihood of the incumbent winning this election was slim from the start -- and it hasn't improved.

### **Failing to Mobilize Voters**

In the wake of the [attacks in Toulouse and Montauban](#), the president enjoyed a brief surge in the opinion polls, but he has been unable to reduce the significant lead projected for Hollande in the runoff election. Another important aspect, though, is which candidate can best mobilize his voters. This will be a challenge for Hollande, who, despite his lead, fails to rouse any enthusiasm.

But the big duel between the two men -- celebrated and amplified by the media -- has overshadowed the actual struggle. Whoever wins the election, Sarkozy or Hollande, will be forced to pursue fairly similar and undoubtedly painful reform policies.

Until then, Jacques Cheminade may be the most bizarre candidate, but the man who wants to colonize Mars is certainly not the only one with his head in the clouds. No matter what the outcome of this election is, the return to Earth promises to be a rough landing.

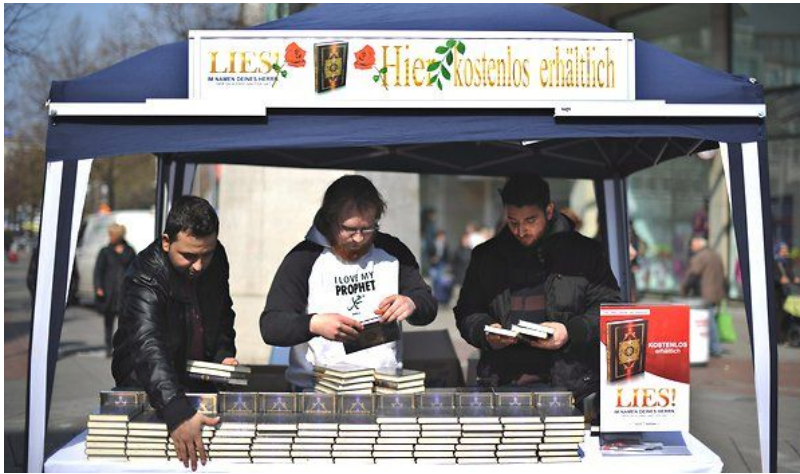
*Translated from the German by Paul Cohen.*

### **URL:**

- <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,827770,00.html>

## Koran Giveaway in Germany Has Some Officials Worried

By MELISSA EDDY and [NICHOLAS KULISH](#)



Members of a Muslim fundamentalist group handed out copies of the Koran in Hanover, Germany, over the weekend. The practice has drawn protests.

BERLIN — A drive by a fundamentalist Muslim group to give a copy of [the Koran](#) to every German, Swiss and Austrian household has tapped into the widespread anti-Islamic feeling in [Germany](#) and created an uproar among politicians and security officials concerned that the group handing out the holy books is using the campaign as a cover to recruit radicals.

There is nothing illegal about distributing religious works in Germany — it is a frequent practice of Scientologists and Hare Krishnas, not to mention Christians — but officials are worried about who is doing the distributing.

The Koran campaign is the brainchild of Ibrahim Abou-Nagie, a [Palestinian](#) who preaches a fiery conservative brand of Islam known as Salafism.

Mr. Abou-Nagie, who has lived in Germany for 30 years, has been on the radar of German security officials since 2005, when he set up a Web site that has been suspected of spreading extremist propaganda. An attempt to prosecute Mr. Abou-Nagie on charges of incitement of religious hatred failed this year.

The campaign to hand out the Korans drew nationwide attention — and widespread condemnation — last week after journalists who had criticized the effort were threatened in an online video. And on Monday, the interior minister in Hesse, a state in central Germany, called Mr. Abou-Nagie and his followers “pied pipers” and said that the danger from radical Islam had reached “a new dimension.”

But Rauf Ceylan, a professor of religious sociology at the University of Osnabrück, said that violent extremists represented “a minority within a minority” and that the discussion of Muslims’ participation in German society should not be focused on Salafists. “Politicians have a great responsibility for communicating the fact that Germany is now an [immigration](#) society,” he said, “and thus far they have failed at that.”

The role of Islam in Europe has been fiercely contested in the decade since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Moderate Muslims say that officials’ emphasis on extremist groups and terrorism helps contribute to a

climate of fear that can lead to violence, like the killings last summer by Anders Behring Breivik in Norway.

A German security official who did not want to be quoted by name because of the delicacy of the issue said officials were worried that disaffected, directionless young people would be drawn to what he called the Salafists' simplistic interpretation of the Koran and find inspiration in it for violent acts.

He cited Arid Uka, who opened fire at a bus carrying American airmen at a Frankfurt airport in March 2011, killing two and wounding two others. Mr. Uka, who was born in Kosovo but had lived in Germany since he was a child, said he had become radicalized by reading Web sites, including some linked to Salafist groups in Germany.

On a Web site set up to promote the Koran distribution campaign, Mr. Abou-Nagie said the goal was "to bring Allah's word to every household." The campaign began in October 2011.

On Saturday, a stack of Korans sat on a table under a white-topped tent in Berlin's Potsdamer Platz, a crossroads for tourists and shoppers, as several men greeted passers-by and offered them copies.

A few yards away, a handful of protesters stood with signs denouncing Islamic extremism. Two squads of police officers kept watch.

Yannick Salziger-Ouatain said he had heard about the giveaway on the Internet and was simply interested in the book's contents. "Islam plays such a major role in the general political discussion right now," he said. "I figured that as a democratic human being, I need to find out more about it and make up my own mind."

## Growth or Austerity? The Question Isn't That Simple

By *REUTERS*

PARIS — Fierce debate is growing in Europe over whether austerity or economic growth offers the best strategy to overcome the Continent's [sovereign debt crisis](#). As if it were that simple.

As the euro zone hovers on the brink of its second [recession](#) in three years, the battle being waged in academic journals, blogs and the financial media has spread to the hustings in France and Greece and will soon move to Germany, the European Union's economic powerhouse.

"Europe can't cut and grow," Sony Kapoor, head of the Re-Define research institute, and Peter Bofinger, a member of the German Council of Economic Advisers, said in an article published before E.U. leaders adopted a budget discipline pact last month. "The E.U. needs a growth compact, not a fiscal one. Swift action on tax and jobs is the way out of the crisis."

The growth camp argues that synchronized austerity across Europe will only aggravate economic contraction, swell the ranks of the unemployed and make it harder for debt-laden countries to reduce their deficits and restore market confidence.

Less government spending eliminates public-sector jobs and shrinks demand, depressing consumer spending and investment, and risks pushing the economy into a self-defeating vicious cycle.

"The question is whether governments should relent in their efforts to reduce deficits now, when the global economy is still weak, and policy credibility is far from granted," the economist Giancarlo Corsetti said in a debate on the VoxEU Web site.

The austerity crowd contends that spending cuts are vital to making public finances sustainable, building credibility with investors and creating conditions for healthy growth that is not based on borrowing or real estate bubbles.

"It would be very easy to lose the credibility we have built with fiscal consolidation," said a senior E.U. policy maker, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Both sides agree that structural economic changes that are intended to lift potential growth by removing barriers in Europe's common market and that make labor laws more flexible can help in the medium term. They differ mostly about the pace of debt reduction.

The growth brigade features a coalition of U.S. economists like Lawrence H. Summers, the former Treasury secretary; the Nobel laureate and New York Times columnist Paul Krugman; the academic Brad DeLong; and the French Socialist presidential candidate François Hollande.

The debt scourges are led by Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and include the European Central Bank and the European Commission.

While heavily indebted states that have received bailouts, like Greece and Portugal, have no alternative to tough austerity, Mr. Summers and Mr. DeLong say short-term spending cuts elsewhere can worsen finances in the long run.

“Unless we believe that the long-term real borrowing costs for Western Europe as a whole will be more than 5 percent per year, spending cuts now to reduce the deficit are likely to erode rather than bolster the overall fiscal situation,” Mr. DeLong said in a contribution to the VoxEU debate.

David Hale, a private economist who runs a consulting firm in Chicago, said European countries should be reducing deficits more incrementally, stretching cuts out over a longer timetable than the Union has set.

“What the Europeans are doing now is depressing revenue, which means they’ll miss their fiscal targets,” he said.

Germany, which pays the bulk of E.U. expenses, pushed through a treaty imposing quasi-automatic fines on euro zone countries that miss their deficit reduction targets, because Ms. Merkel and others were determined not to allow a repeat what they saw as the causes of the bloc’s [debt crisis](#).

According to the German narrative, peripheral euro zone governments and consumers borrowed beyond their means to finance spending binges that burdened states, banks and households with unmanageable debts.

The European Commission and the International Monetary Fund recommend that countries achieve most of their deficit reduction by cutting spending rather than raising taxes.

Both institutions would also like to see Germany in particular, which has a low budget deficit and decent growth, increase domestic demand to help stimulate the European economy. But Berlin is cautious, and it is not clear whether German consumers will actually spend rather than save the above-inflation wage increases they are getting this year.

Italy and Spain are in the throes of austerity programs driven by bond investors who have lost confidence in those countries’ ability to repay debts.

Spanish bond yields have spiked again since Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy rejected a deficit target his predecessor had agreed to with E.U. authorities and set a higher target.

Analysts say the market move was caused by a loss of credibility for Spanish policy and fears that Madrid will not meet its new goal because of a deeper-than-expected recession. Unemployment has risen to 23 percent, with one young person in two out of a job.

That complicates the policy choices for Spain and Brussels, which Olivier Blanchard, chief economist for the I.M.F., summed up as “damned if you do and damned if you don’t.”

In Germany, Ms. Merkel faces a challenge to her deficit-cutting ideology in a key regional election next month in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, where the Social Democrats are running on a platform of growth before austerity.

In France, Mr. Hollande, a favorite in opinion polls to oust President Nicolas Sarkozy next month, has said he will focus more on reviving growth than cutting spending. “The credibility of debt reduction depends first and foremost on economic recovery,” he said last week.

The problem, many economists say, is not with his aim of increasing growth but with his way of going about it. Mr. Hollande plans to cut the deficit mostly by raising taxes on the rich, on investment income and on banks, while creating hundreds of thousands of subsidized jobs for young people.

This in a country where public spending already accounts for 55 percent of economic output and the tax burden is among the highest in Europe.

Even those who want Europe to ease the pace of deficit reduction say France needs to do more to shrink the state. “In France, cutting public spending would free up resources for the private sector,” Mr. Hale, the U.S. economist, said. “Elements of fiscal reform would be positive for growth over two to three years, especially if you could match it with tax cuts.”

*Paul Taylor is a Reuters correspondent.*

NYT April 16, 2012

## Central Bank Not Expected to Try to Ease Europe's Crisis

By [JACK EWING](#) and [RAPHAEL MINDER](#)

FRANKFURT — As the euro zone crisis shows signs of heating up again, political leaders are once more looking to the [European Central Bank](#) for help.

But analysts say they do not expect the central bank, with its focus on fiscal discipline, to provide any quick remedies.

Spain continues to be the focus of regional anxiety, as its borrowing costs rose further on Monday before two crucial debt auctions this week. But some political leaders elsewhere also are feeling public heat as a result of unpopular government policies in response to Europe's debt debacle — particularly in France, which will hold the first round of voting in its presidential election this weekend.

The French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, and his main challenger, François Hollande, have begun loudly pushing the European Central Bank to intervene more forcefully in the sovereign bond markets or take other steps to relieve hard-pressed governments.

But analysts say such pushing could be counterproductive because the bank and its president, Mario Draghi, might be even less likely to act if doing so could appear to be a response to political pressure.

“If I want the E.C.B. to intervene in the sovereign debt market, I would be very angry with Sarkozy,” said Jacob Funk Kirkegaard, a research fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington.

One action the central bank could take, if it chose, would be to try to calm the financial waters by buying Spanish bonds in the open market to help hold down Madrid's borrowing costs, as Spain tries this week to auction off 5.5 billion euros, or \$7.2 billion, in new debt.

The central bank has bought bonds from Spain, Greece and other indebted countries off and on since 2010, but the impact on bond prices has usually been only temporary.

The region's sense of crisis over Spain rose Monday as the yield, or effective interest rate, on its 10-year bonds reached 6.10 percent in the open market. That is up from less than 5 percent as recently as March, and it is the highest since Spain's conservative government, under Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, took office late last year.

The higher Spain's borrowing costs, the greater the fear that it might require a costly European bailout.

Whether the central bank intervenes “is a function of how much the E.C.B. thinks markets are overshooting and how confident the E.C.B. is that Spanish authorities are doing the right thing and adopting credible measures,” said Nick Matthews, an economist at Royal Bank of Scotland.

On Tuesday, Luis de Guindos, the Spanish economy minister, is scheduled to call on Mr. Draghi here. The central bank would not comment on what they planned to discuss.

The European Central Bank has also become an issue in the French presidential campaign in recent days, with the two leading candidates lambasting the bank and its policies.

Mr. Sarkozy, behind in the polls days before voters go to the polls, said the [European Union](#) should rewrite the bank's mandate to compel it to pay more attention to economic growth than to controlling inflation. His main challenger, Mr. Hollande, the Socialist candidate, has blamed the central bank for letting the [sovereign debt crisis](#) get out of control.

An expansion of the bank's writ to make it behave more like the United States Federal Reserve is extremely unlikely, however.

By law, the European Central Bank's primary task is to contain inflation, whereas the Fed has much greater leeway to buy [Treasury bonds](#) or take other steps to stimulate lending and growth. A revision of the central bank's legal mandate would require a change in the European Union treaty, including unanimous approval by the 27 member states.

"The chance of this happening is zero," Mr. Kirkegaard said. "Sarkozy knows that, and Hollande knows that. This is French election Kabuki theater."

Germany, the country most stridently opposed to taking the central bank's focus off inflation, had little reaction to Mr. Sarkozy's comments, probably because most people considered them to be obvious electioneering.

"The German position on the E.C.B. and its independent role is known, also in Paris, and has been unchanged for a long time," Steffen Seibert, spokesman for Chancellor Angela Merkel, said at a news briefing on Monday. But Mr. Seibert added that Germany agreed with France on the need for sustainable growth in Europe.

In any case, the central bank's mandate already encourages it to support growth in the euro zone, just not at the expense of inflation. Mr. Draghi and other top policy makers have often said that they believe modest inflation is a prerequisite for growth.

Still, the statements by the French candidates reflect the frustrations of leaders who must bear the political cost of structural changes that have effectively been a condition for European Central Bank aid, like cutting government budgets and making it easier to fire workers.

The central bank has been widely credited with calming the markets with the total of 1 trillion euros in low-cost three-year loans that it issued to commercial banks in December and March — some of which was used by the banks to buy more government bonds. But the central bank made that money available only after Spain and Italy committed to labor deregulation and other changes.

The central bank has bought various governments' bonds on the open market intermittently since May 2010, spending 214 billion euros. It does not disclose what bonds it buys, but is believed to have focused on those of troubled countries like Greece, Portugal and Ireland, as well as Spain and Italy. That program has been dormant lately.

Mr. Kirkegaard and other analysts said they thought that the central bank might begin to buy Spanish bonds — especially if Spain's leaders commit to more steps to remove impediments to growth.

But they said more forceful central bank action — like a cut in its main interest rate from 1 percent, or another round of inexpensive three-year loans — was unlikely in coming months, because the bank is still concerned about inflation.

Meanwhile, the Spain is trying to reassure investors that it would be able to rescue any of its 17 regional governments if their finances deteriorate further. Spain posted a national budget deficit of 8.5 percent of gross domestic product last year, well above its target of 6 percent. A big reason was the deficits of the regional governments.



Mr. de Guindos, the economy minister, has repeatedly pledged that the government “will not let any region collapse” because of its solvency problems, while urging them to apply greater fiscal discipline.

On Monday, he met in Paris with French investors to try to convince them that Spain would not need a Greece-style bailout. When he meets Tuesday with Mr. Draghi, it is a message that he is likely to repeat.

Jack Ewing reported from Frankfurt, and Raphael Minder from Madrid. Melissa Eddy contributed reporting from Berlin.

## Anti-capitalists and Communists

### In their own words

The Economist Blog Elysée Apr 16th 2012, 9:16 by S.P. | PARIS

THE strict rules governing the right to equal airtime for all ten presidential candidates, which have been in place since last week, are based on a commendable principle. But the result, if you watch television or listen to the radio at the moment, gives the impression that France is awash with Communists, anti-capitalists and other revolutionaries.

Three candidates fall loosely into the far-left camp, and therefore between them are allocated nearly a third of all airtime: the Left Front's Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who is backed by the Communists; the New Anti-Capitalist Party's Philippe Poutou, a car-factory worker who took over from Olivier Besancenot, the postman who ran in 2007, and Nathalie Artaud, from the Workers' Struggle.

Together, these three get 14%-18% of the vote, according to the latest series of [polls](#), with the vast majority of that going to Mr Mélenchon. To put this figure in perspective, remember that François Bayrou, the centrist candidate, is polling at around just 9%-11%.

You really need to be here to appreciate the sort of discussions that are currently taking place on serious political programmes. For the benefit of those following from afar, here are some excerpts.

Mr Poutou was on the [radio](#) last week talking about his plan to reduce the French working week from 35 hours to 32. The idea, explained Mr Poutou patiently, is "to work as little as possible and to earn as much as possible":

We're told that the 35 hour week is a luxury. Well we think it should be reduced.

He then added:

If it was possible to not work at all, we wouldn't be against that.

Mr Poutou sits squarely on the revolutionary far left, which dreams of overthrowing the capitalist system. So does Ms Artaud, who this weekend denounced Mr Mélenchon for being a mere "vote-catcher" for François Hollande. To this pair, Mr Mélenchon, who spent years as a Socialist Senator but is now backed by the Communists, is merely a harder-talking version of the traditional establishment left. The Communist Party, after all, was until ten years ago part of a formal governing alliance with the Socialist Party at national level, under Lionel Jospin, and has hooked up with the party on various lists at regional and local elections. So it is worth listening closely to the man.

Mr Mélenchon's slogan is "Seize power". His television clip ends with the line:

You see, with the will, we can share out the wealth. The money exists. What needs to be done is to make it available to everybody.

[Here](#) is a taste of the man in full flow, at a rally in Clermond-Ferrand, to rapturous applause:

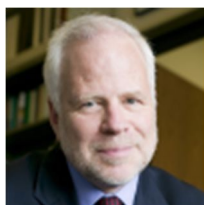
Look the rich in the eye, and tell them not "I'm not dangerous" but "I am dangerous": I'm going to empty your pockets!

And [here](#) he is explaining in a TV debate the core of his programme:

The number one question is not immigration or insecurity, the number one question in society is the sharing out of wealth...If I'm elected, we will share it out, and those who don't want to share willingly will share by force.

I could go on, but will leave it at that for now. It may help explain why, outside France, with his 75% top tax rate, François Hollande comes across as an outdated, old-style tax-and-spend leftist. But inside the country, he is seen as a woolly moderate who has embraced austerity politics and the Brussels consensus.

## The ECB's Lethal Inhibition



### Barry Eichengreen

*Barry Eichengreen is Professor of Economics and Political Science at the University of California at Berkeley, and a former senior policy adviser at the International Monetary Fund.*

BERKELEY – Last December, with Europe's financial system on the brink of disaster, the European Central Bank stunned the markets with an unprecedented intervention, offering banks across the eurozone essentially unlimited liquidity against any and all collateral for an exceptional period of three years.



Illustration by Chris Van Es

The ECB's surprise liquidity operation put the continent's crisis on hold. But now, just fourth months later, matters are again coming to a head. The big southern European countries, Spain and Italy, battered by austerity, are spiraling into recession. The deterioration of economic conditions is casting doubt on their governments' budgetary arithmetic, undermining political support for structural reform, and reopening seemingly closed questions about the stability of banking systems.

Once again, the eurozone appears to be on the verge of unraveling. So, will it be once more into the breach for the ECB?

The hurdles to further monetary-policy action are high, but they are largely self-imposed. At its most recent policy meeting, the ECB left its policy rate unchanged, citing inflation half a percentage point above the official 2% target. Board members may have also been concerned by evidence of cost-push inflation in Germany. The leading German trade union, IG Metall, has called for a 6.5% wage increase in the next annual round of negotiations. And German public-sector workers obtained an agreement at the end of March that boosts wages by 6.3% in the coming two years.

But this increase in German labor costs is, in fact, precisely what Europe needs to accelerate its rebalancing, because it will help to realign the competitive positions of the northern and southern European economies.

Southern Europe needs to enhance its competitiveness and export more, and has been criticized (not without justification) for failing to do more along these lines. But what matters are southern Europe's costs of production relative to those of Germany, Europe's export champion. That is why the prospect of rising German labor costs, after a decade of stasis, is actually one of the few positive economic developments on the European scene – hardly something that the ECB should resist.

And the fact that higher wages in Germany will be matched by lower wages across southern Europe suggests that continent-wide inflationary pressures will remain subdued. With eurozone unemployment above 10%, it is hard to see how things could be otherwise. The 2.6% headline inflation rate in March was heavily influenced by spiking energy prices, the effects of which should be transitory (events in the Middle East permitting). Indeed, the ECB's own forecast has inflation falling in the second half of 2012 and again in 2013, suggesting that it has monetary room for maneuver.

A second argument against further monetary-policy action is that it should be considered only as a reward for budgetary austerity and structural reform, areas in which politicians continue to underperform. Where spending cuts should, in principle, help to dampen inflation, European governments, like that of Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, are backtracking on their budgetary commitments. Similarly, where structural reforms should rein in price growth by encouraging competition, leaders like Italian Prime Minister Mario Monti, finding it increasingly difficult to marshal support for unpopular measures, are watering down already-modest proposals to enhance labor-market flexibility.

With governments hesitating to do their part, the ECB is reluctant to support them. In its view, rewarding them with monetary stimulus – keeping the boat afloat with more spending – only relieves the pressure on national officials to do what is necessary.

If this is the ECB's thinking, then it is playing a dangerous game. Without spending and growth, there can be no solution to Europe's problems. Absent private spending, budget cuts will only depress tax revenues, requiring additional budget cuts, without end. There will be no economic growth at the end of the tunnel, and political support for structural reforms will continue to dissipate.

The ECB is preoccupied by moral-hazard risk – the idea that supporting spending will relieve the pressure on governments to act. But it should also worry about meltdown risk – about the danger that its own failure to act, by leading to a deep recession, will undermine political leaders' ability to take the steps needed to put their economies on a sound footing.

The ECB will object, not without reason, that monetary policy is a blunt instrument with which to rebalance the European economy. A cut in policy rates or “quantitative easing” by another name will do nothing to enhance the troubled southern European economies' competitiveness.

True enough. But, without economic growth, the political will to take hard measures at the national level is unlikely to be forthcoming. Without support from the ECB, both goals – economic recovery and political leaders' commitment to structural reform – will remain purely aspirational.

## Sarkozy veut rouvrir le débat sur le rôle de la BCE

Le Figaro Par [Jean-Pierre Robin](#) Mis à jour le 15/04/2012 à 22:13 | publié le 15/04/2012 à 21:00 [Réactions](#) (36)

### **Dimanche, place de la Concorde, Nicolas Sarkozy a plaidé pour que la BCE devienne un acteur clé du soutien à la croissance.**

Un mois après avoir proposé, dans son [discours de Villepinte](#), de renforcer le traité de Schengen sur l'immigration en instaurant un véritable contrôle aux frontières de l'Europe, [Nicolas Sarkozy](#) aborde un dossier tout aussi délicat politiquement: «Sur le rôle de la Banque centrale dans le soutien à la croissance, nous allons aussi ouvrir le débat et nous allons faire avancer l'Europe.»

C'est un sujet récurrent depuis le lancement de l'union économique et monétaire. Le traité fondateur de Maastricht de 1992 donne pour mission prioritaire absolue à la [BCE](#) la lutte contre l'inflation. Contrairement à son homologue la Fed américaine, qui a un double objectif explicite de stabilité des prix et de soutien à la croissance économique.

Le partenaire privilégié d'[Angela Merkel](#) n'a pas éludé les tabous qu'éveille sa proposition, mentionnant «les limites fixées (à la BCE) dans le traité de Maastricht». Mais, a-t-il ajouté, «c'est un problème majeur pour l'avenir de l'Europe... L'Europe doit apurer ses dettes, elle n'a pas le choix, mais, entre la déflation et la croissance, elle n'a pas davantage le choix. Si elle choisit la déflation, elle disparaîtra, il faut se souvenir des années 1930.»

Le problème ainsi posé va bien au-delà du réglage de la politique monétaire de la Banque centrale européenne. Celle-ci n'a d'ailleurs pas hésité ces derniers mois à [ouvrir en grand les vannes](#) pour à la fois sauver les banques confrontées à une crise de liquidités et faciliter indirectement le refinancement des États.

Cette stratégie a coïncidé avec l'arrivée de [Mario Draghi](#) à la présidence de la BCE le 1er novembre 2011, mais aussi avec la signature du [traité européen du 9 décembre 2011](#) instituant un «pacte fiscal» par lequel les États s'engagent à ramener leurs déficits publics à zéro à l'horizon 2016.

### **La question de la compétitivité**

En même temps, on voit bien les limites de la manœuvre. On fait mine de croire que les déséquilibres au sein de l'Europe se résumeraient aux seuls déficits publics. Le véritable défi est bien plus profond. Il concerne les déséquilibres commerciaux entre les pays de la zone euro, comme le reconnaissent eux-mêmes les responsables de la BCE en public et en privé plus encore.

Ces déséquilibres résultent bien sûr des écarts de compétitivité entre territoires nationaux, et on peut regretter que le problème ait été si peu évoqué dans la campagne présidentielle. À l'évidence, les efforts à accomplir sont d'abord dans le camp des pays qui présentent un handicap à cet égard, que ce soit la France, l'Italie ou l'Espagne.

Reste deux questions plus troublantes. La compétitivité constitue une vertu relative, et, si la concurrence est une bonne chose, c'est aussi une course sans fin. D'autre part, il existe au sein de l'union monétaire des spécialisations et des disparités structurelles indéniables. Il faut les reconnaître et accepter d'y remédier de façon coopérative, et non pas en s'en tenant au chacun pour soi.

C'est là que la proposition de Nicolas Sarkozy de revoir la mission et les modes d'intervention de la BCE fait sens. Certes, [la place de la Concorde](#) n'est pas le cénacle idéal pour traiter d'un aggiornamento de la BCE. Mais, qu'on le veuille ou non, celle-ci représente la seule institution réellement fédérale de l'Europe. Elle est donc l'instrument central pour réfléchir à son avenir politique.

## Koranverteilungen in deutschen Städten: Die Sache mit der Wahrheit

FAS 14.04.2012 · Kritik an den Absichten kommt bei ihnen nicht gut an: Salafisten verteilen Koran-Ausgaben in deutschen Städten - weil Allahs Wort die Wahrheit sei. Was sie wirklich wollen, verschleiern sie jedoch.

Von Friederike Haupt



Ein paar junge Männer, viele Korane: In mehreren deutschen Städten wurden am Samstag deutschsprachige Koran-Ausgaben verteilt

Es läuft gerade gut für die Männer mit den Koranen, als sich einer von ihnen einen Spaß erlaubt. Er nimmt ein Buch vom Tisch vor sich, ein schön gebundenes, dunkelblaues mit goldener Schrift darauf, es ist der Koran. Der Mann hält sich das Buch unter die Nase und sagt: „Riecht gut!“ Dann nimmt er ein anderes Buch in die Hand: das Neue Testament in einer billigen Taschenbuchausgabe. Er tut so, als schnuppere er auch daran, und stellt dann fest: „Nix!“ Die zwei jungen Männer hinter ihm kichern. „Stinkt noch nicht mal“, sagt einer von ihnen, alle drei lachen. Später wird ein Freund, der die Szene gefilmt hat, sein Video ins Internet stellen. Damit alle wissen, an welches Buch sie sich zu halten haben.

Ihren Stand, an dem sie im März in der Frankfurter Fußgängerzone Korane verteilten, hatten die Männer allerdings mit ganz anderen Worten angemeldet. Das „Aufzeigen von Gemeinsamkeiten der drei semitischen Religionen“ sei ihr Anliegen, hatten sie dem Ordnungsamt geschrieben. Auch über die „Gemeinsamkeiten der Heiligen Bücher (Bibel, Thora und Quran)“ wollten sie mit Passanten sprechen. Und „außerdem“, so stand da, sollten Korane verschenkt werden. Weil die Männer wussten, dass da, wo sie stehen wollten - vor dem größten Einkaufszentrum der größten Einkaufsstraße der Stadt - keine Infostände erlaubt waren, meldeten sie ihren Büchertisch einfach als Versammlung an, Teilnehmerzahl: vier. Das Ordnungsamt genehmigte den ersten Antrag, es genehmigte noch ein paar weitere, doch als klar war, dass da immer nur ein Infostand kommen würde und nie eine Versammlung, verbot es den Männern, ihren Büchertisch vor dem Kaufhaus aufzustellen. Die Männer kommen jetzt mit Umhängetaschen, in denen sie die Korane mitbringen.

### **300.000 Korane sind schon gedruckt worden**

25 Millionen davon will der Initiator der bundesweiten Aktion, der Kölner Ibrahim Abu Nagie, an die Deutschen verteilen lassen. In Videobotschaften hat er alle Muslime aufgefordert, sich an seinem Projekt zu beteiligen, mit Geldspenden oder persönlichem Einsatz. Und viele Gläubige folgen ihm, denn sie verehren Abu Nagie, er ist ein bekannter Prediger. Wer ihn nicht verehrt, könnte auch sagen: ein Hassprediger.



© dapd

Wer möchte und ein bisschen Glück hat, kann mit ihm persönlich über den Koran sprechen: Abu Nagie, der Initiator der Verteilung

Abu Nagie, der palästinensischer Herkunft ist und vor etwa 30 Jahren nach Deutschland kam, gilt als einer der obersten Salafisten in Deutschland, als wichtiges Mitglied eines riesigen Islamisten-Netztes, das weit über die Grenzen Deutschlands hinausreicht. Abu Nagie befürwortet die „Vernichtung Andersgläubiger“, meint der Verfassungsschutz, der ihn genau beobachtet. Und er missioniert. Möglichst viele Deutsche versuche er für den Salafismus zu gewinnen, um den Extremismus zu verbreiten. In den Koranen, die seit einem halben Jahr Samstag für Samstag in deutschen Städten verschenkt werden, steht als Herausgeber Ibrahim Abu Nagie, 50765 Köln. 300.000 Stück sind schon gedruckt worden.

Wer möchte und ein bisschen Glück hat, kann mit Abu Nagie persönlich über den Koran sprechen. Man muss dafür nur die Telefonnummer wählen, die auf seiner Internetseite „Die wahre Religion“ angegeben ist. Dann meldet sich nach langem Klingeln manchmal eine leise, freundliche Stimme mit „Abu Nagie“. Die Stimme hört man auch in vielen Videos auf der Seite, die „Andrea und Francesco nehmen den Islam an“ heißen, „1/3 der Europäer sind psychisch krank“ oder „Die Allianz der Irreführung“, und in denen der Prediger seinen Anhängern die Welt, wie er sie sieht, erklärt. Gern erzählt er am Telefon, wie er auf die Idee kam, jeden Haushalt in Deutschland mit einem Koran auszustatten. „Wir haben festgestellt, dass in vielen Bibliotheken gefälschte Übersetzungen des Korans sind“, sagt er. Als jemand, der seine Religion liebt, sei er verpflichtet, sie zu verteidigen. Außerdem sei Allahs Wort für alle Menschen das beste Geschenk ihres Lebens.

## „Ehrliche Menschen, die nach der Wahrheit suchen“

Abu Nagie redet sich in Fahrt. Wer nicht Allah diene, sei ein Tier „und kann sich gleich einen Psychiater suchen“. Muslime, die Deutschen schmeicheln wollten, indem sie deren Religionen als gleichwertig bezeichneten, seien Verräter. „Christen, Juden kommen in die Hölle, wenn sie den Islam nicht annehmen! Wenn wir uns am Jüngsten Tag treffen, werden Sie sehen, dass ich recht habe.“ Ein Hassprediger sei er natürlich nicht, sagt der Salafist, denn dann würde er ja nicht den Koran kostenlos an die Kuffar - die „Ungläubigen“ - verteilen, um sie zu retten. Allerdings gibt er zu, das nicht etwa aus Nächstenliebe zu tun. Allah habe es befohlen und werde am Jüngsten Tag fragen: Warum habt ihr den Menschen nicht die Wahrheit gesagt? So sage er ihnen jetzt eben die Wahrheit.



© dpa



Webseite „Die wahre Religion“: Für alle, die sich genug Missionierungsvideos angesehen haben, steht hier auch die Nummer des „Konversion-Telefons“

Von seinem Erfolg ist der Islamist überzeugt - trotz der „Falschmeldungen“ in der Presse, die ihm oft nur schaden wolle. „Ich war bei mehr als zwanzig Infoständen. Das Lächeln in den Gesichtern der Menschen werde ich nicht vergessen“, sagt Abu Nagie, er macht eine Kunstpause. „Da sind viele ehrliche Menschen, die nach der Wahrheit suchen.“ So sehr sei er schon seit Jahren um diese Menschen bemüht, dass er darüber nicht einmal mehr Zeit finde, seinen eigenen Kindern Arabisch beizubringen. Ein großer Einsatz für die Rettung der Ungläubigen, soll das wohl bedeuten. Dann verabschiedet sich Abu Nagie. Er habe 30.000 Menschen in Deutschland zu „betreuen“, sein Telefon klinge Tag und Nacht.

## **Auf jedem Plakat, Tasche und Flyer steht eine Internetadresse**

Viele Muslime lieben Abu Nagie - sogar, wenn sie selbst sich nicht zu den Salafisten zählen. Die meisten von denen, die für ihn Korane in den Städten verteilen, kennen den Prediger gar nicht persönlich. Sie haben bloß die Bücher und den 2,20 Meter großen Tisch abgeholt, die weiße Tischdecke, die Plakate und die Aufsteller dafür. All das hält der Verein „Die wahre Religion“ für sie bereit, denn es soll möglichst einfach und billig sein zu helfen. Sogar einen Brief für die Anmeldung eines Infostandes kann jeder herunterladen. „Für ein besseres Miteinander“, steht da ganz oben. Und alle Aktivisten sagen, es sei doch nichts dabei, ein paar Korane zu verschenken an die, die welche haben wollten.



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Die Salafisten aus Frankfurt wichen an Karsamstag nach Offenbach aus. Auch an diesem Wochenende kamen sie

Der Verfassungsschutz ist aber im Internet auf Videos gestoßen, die mehr zeigen. An Infoständen würden auch direkt Konversionen zum Islam durchgeführt, heißt es in einem Bericht. Und auf jedem Plakat, jeder Tasche, jedem T-Shirt, jedem Flyer zur Koran-Verteilaktion steht eine Internetadresse. Wer sie aufruft und auf den Facebook-Button klickt, landet direkt beim Auftritt von „Die wahre Religion“. Und damit bei Ibrahim Abu Nagie. Für alle, die sich genug seiner Missionierungsvideos angesehen haben, steht auf der Startseite auch die Nummer des „Konversion-Telefons“.

Kritik an den Absichten hinter der Koran-Verteilung kommt beim Initiator und seinen Aktivisten nicht gut an. Ein Deutsch-Tunesier veröffentlichte in dieser Woche ein Drohvideo gegen zwei Journalisten, die namentlich genannt und als „Affen“ und „Schweine“ bezeichnet wurden. Und eine Offenbacher SPD-Politikerin, die am Karsamstag in der Nähe eines Infostandes Flugblätter verteilt hatte, um auf die Gefahren des Islamismus hinzuweisen, wurde von Salafisten auf der Straße als „Tier“, „Zecke“, „schlimmer als Adolf Hitler“ beschimpft. Andere Einschüchterungsversuche folgten. Am vergangenen Samstag stand die Politikerin wieder da - und brachte noch ein paar Genossen mit.

## **„Dem Fundamentalismus keine Chance“**

Sigrid Herrmann-Marschall ist eine hochgewachsene Frau mit langen, roten Haaren, die langen Fingernägel trägt sie gerade hellblau lackiert, und falls sie Angst vor den Islamisten hat, lässt sie sich das

nicht anmerken. „Ich hatte auch schon Nazis vorm Haus stehen“, sagt Herrmann-Marschall; es ist nicht das erste Mal, dass sie sich gegen Extremisten engagiert.

Eigentlich ist die Diplom-Biologin Unterbezirkssprecherin für Umweltschutz in Offenbach - und Atheistin. Aber mit dem Islam beschäftige sie sich schon seit fünfzehn Jahren, sagt sie. Und als sie am Karfreitag nicht einschlafen konnte, im Internet surfte und las, dass die Salafisten aus Frankfurt am nächsten Tag nach Offenbach ausweichen wollten, war die Sache für sie klar. Sie schrieb einen kleinen Text auf ihrem Laptop, Überschrift: „Dem Fundamentalismus keine Chance“, unten klein ihr Name und ihre Adresse, druckte ihn ein paar Dutzend mal auf weißem Papier aus und schloss die Augen. Der nächste Tag könnte Kraft kosten, dachte sie.

So war es auch. Von 15 bis 20 Uhr stand sie in der Fußgängerzone, nur ein paar Meter entfernt vom Stand mit den Koranen. Drei Konvertiten hätten ihn aufgebaut, mit ihnen sei sie noch ins Gespräch gekommen, erinnert sich Herrmann-Marschall. Zwei der drei jungen Männer hätten ihr ein wenig über sich erzählt: dass sie beide ohne Vater aufgewachsen seien, dass sie im Islam Halt und Sinn fänden. Der dritte Mann sei aggressiv gewesen, habe sie aufgefordert zu gehen und sie nachgeäfft.

## **Harmlos waren die Männer in der Fußgängerzone nicht**

Später, als schon acht bis zehn Männer am Stand waren, kam ein Mann von dort zu ihr, forderte ein Flugblatt, und als sie es ihm gab, warf er es demonstrativ in den Müll. Dann verlangte er grinsend das nächste. Ein paar zehnjährigen Jungs, die sich Korane geholt hatten, wollte Herrmann-Marschall auch ihre Zettel geben. „Von Ungläubigen nehmen wir nichts an“, hätten sie voller Verachtung zu ihr gesagt, erinnert sich die Politikerin, „das war super erschreckend, denn das waren ja noch Kinder.“ Ein Mitarbeiter des Ordnungsamtes, der kam, um sich ein Bild vom Infostand zu machen, habe ihr geraten, bei Gefahr in ein nahegelegenes Geschäft zu flüchten. So weit sei es aber nicht gekommen.

Harmlos waren die Männer in der Fußgängerzone indes nicht. Einige von ihnen erkannte Herrmann-Marschall später in Videos auf Youtube wieder: Es waren Mitglieder des salafistischen Vereins „DawaFFM“ aus Frankfurt, der schon länger vom Verfassungsschutz beobachtet wird. Er ist einer der Knotenpunkte des islamistischen Netzes in Deutschland. Zu ihm gehören auch die Männer, die im März noch auf der Frankfurter Einkaufsstraße Zeil ihren Infostand aufbauten - und die seit einigen Wochen in andere hessische Städte ziehen, um auch da Koran-Ausgaben zu verteilen.

In Wiesbaden meldeten im März an vier Samstagen vier Männer „aus dem Frankfurter Raum“ einen Infostand an, der auch genehmigt wurde. Als Privatpersonen hätten sie die Anträge gestellt, erinnert sich ein Mitarbeiter des Ordnungsamtes. Aber alle hätten dieselbe E-Mail-Adresse angegeben, die eines Vereins, allerdings nicht von „DawaFFM“. Und auch sie behaupteten, die „Gemeinsamkeiten der drei semitischen Religionen“ aufzeigen zu wollen - um dann die blauen Koran-Ausgaben von Abu Nagie zu verteilen.

## **„1500 Bestellungen für den kostenlosen Koran“**

Sigrid Herrmann-Marschall ist wütend über diese Tricks. Auf ihrem Flugblatt warnt sie vor den Aktivisten, die „labile junge Menschen in ihren Bann“ ziehen wollten. Bei vielen ist ihnen das schon gelungen: Im Internet feuern sie einander an, trotz der Kritik weiterzumachen. „Möglichkeiten gibt es immer, den Koran zu verteilen, da brauchen wir uns wirklich keine Sorgen zu machen“, schreibt einer auf der Facebook-Seite von „Die wahre Religion“. Schließe sich eine Tür, öffne Allah zehn andere. „Vor sechzig Jahren war Anti-Juden-Propaganda, jetzt Islam“, schreibt ein anderer, und viele loben die „Brüder und Schwestern“ für ihren unermüdlichen Einsatz.

Auch Ibrahim Abu Nagie feuert seine Mitstreiter an. „Liebe Geschwister im Islam, wir haben seit gestern mehr als 1500 Bestellungen für den kostenlosen Koran von Nicht-Muslimen erhalten“, schrieb er am

Freitag auf Facebook. Auf den Straßen hielten sich die Salafisten an diesem Samstag allerdings zurück: In mehreren der 35 Städte, in denen sie Infostände angemeldet hatten, bauten sie dann doch keine auf. Nach Offenbach kamen sie. Vier junge Männer, viele Korane - und zwanzig Meter entfernt stand Sigrid Herrmann-Marschall. Sie gehe erst, wenn der Stand wieder abgebaut sei, sagt sie. „Alles andere verbietet mir mein Stolz.“

Quelle: F.A.S.

# Time To Panic About Europe Again

## The Eurozone debt crisis is back, and it's not going away.

In SLATE, by [Matthew Yglesias](#) | Posted Friday, April 6, 2012, at 2:21 PM ET



Police clash with demonstrators during a 24-hour strike last week in Barcelona

Europanic is back in style. After a monthslong reprieve initiated by the European Central Bank's decision to offer the continent's banks [nearly unlimited quantities of low-interest medium-term loans](#), the sovereign debt crisis has returned. This time ground zero is Spain rather than Italy, but the pattern is familiar. Interest rates on Spain's debt went up a little, putting further strain on Spain's budget. That called its solvency into question and pushed up rates further still. And as interest rates rise, Spanish banks' viability comes into doubt, squeezing credit to the domestic economy and further weakening the budget. Depending on how you look at it, it's a sovereign debt crisis, a banking crisis, or a simple growth crisis, but in any case, there is a risk of national default, total bank meltdown, and perhaps the collapse of the single currency or even the larger European project.

The key symptoms include a [Spanish bond auction](#) on Wednesday that drew little demand from investors, and a [flight back into U.S. Treasury bonds](#) and away from European debt. And of course while Spain is a big deal on its own terms, lurking behind it is the reality that if Spain goes down, the [larger economies of Italy](#) and even France will be pulled into the muck.

Fundamentally, the crisis recurred because the last "solution" to the crisis solved nothing. It was a half-genius, half-mad suture to narrowly address the banking crisis. Given enough free money from the ECB, any bank has the ability to stay solvent. That calmed nerves, and the newly solvent banks were quietly encouraged to load up on European government debt, which helped bring interest rate spreads down. At the time, critics assailed this as little more than an effort to kick the can down the road, and they were right. But oftentimes in a panic situation, down the road is exactly where you want the can to go. If resolving the underlying problems with Europe's economic framework were easy, it would have been done already. Solving hard problems takes time, so stopgap time-buying measures are welcome. The trouble is that months later, not only are the fundamental issues still with us, it's difficult to say that any progress at all has been made.

Simply put, Europe's current institutions are unworkable. The aim of kicking the can down the road must be to create better ones. Before the crisis, capital flowed from Germany (and to an extent small countries such as Austria, Finland, and the Netherlands) into the so-called "peripheral" countries. By importing capital, the peripheral countries were able to import more than they exported, and their citizens consumed more than they saved. In Greece and Portugal, this entailed a great deal of government borrowing, but in Spain and Ireland, the borrowing was largely in the private sector. Then came a loss of confidence in the soundness of this lending, and the capital stopped flowing in.

This kind of “sudden stop” of external financing is sadly common in the annals of international finance. What normally happens is the indebted country finds the value of its currency plummeting. Real wages tumble, and workers can buy less as the value of the currency falls. Eyeball deep in debt, the country’s citizens find themselves working longer for less. Perhaps politicians are inspired by the suffering to enact smart policy reforms that speed the recovery of pre-crisis living standards or perhaps not.

But Spain and Italy and Greece don’t have an independent currency to collapse. In this, they’re hardly unique. In a large country like the United States, sometimes investment flows in to a given area and then halts, damaging the local budget and employment situation. But in the U.S., a jurisdiction facing a sudden investment decline—think of Florida or Arizona today—still benefits from a continued stream of Social Security and Medicare checks. What’s more, unemployment insurance, food stamps, and Medicaid ensures that the worse you get hit, the more federal assistance you get. Last but by no means least, when the local economy collapses, you can always move to another state. And indeed, leaving has long been an important part of America’s adjustment process. Regions whose industries are in decline lose people, regions that prosper gain people, and a desire to not see the entire population flee acts as something of a check on malgovernment.

Europe has none of these protections. Not only are Europeans habitually less mobile than Americans, they have the unfortunate habit of speaking different languages. A person from Lisbon or Seville or Naples is going to have a tough time getting a decent job in Amsterdam or Munich or Helsinki, since few Europeans speak German and nobody speaks the other Northern European languages.

Europe is trapped in a vise between currency values that can’t adjust, populations that can’t move, and regions that don’t support each other financially. This vise has led to, among other things, extremely challenging sovereign debt loads. But rounds of budget cuts treat the symptoms without doing anything to facilitate the underlying adjustments that need to happen. Nor are the linguistic and cultural barriers to intra-European migration going to vanish any time for the foreseeable future. German taxpayers could simply finance open-ended transfer payments to their poorer cousins the way Massachusetts subsidizes Mississippi, but eventually their patience will stop. Americans in Massachusetts and Americans in Mississippi do feel themselves part of the same country, sharing language and culture. Germans and Spaniards do not feel the same. And, in fact, all possible solutions tend to founder on this same point. Germany could tolerate higher inflation or flip its tax system around to accommodate southern Europe’s needs, but German voters want the German government to respond to *their* needs. The impulse is understandable, but the practical consequences are disastrous. The single currency was set up as a political project intended to drive deeper political integration. The recurring debt crises we see today are the fruits of the risky bet that Europeans could unite across national borders. It’s been a costly gamble so far and there’s no sign that it’s going to start paying off any time soon.

## • Les salafistes distribuent des corans en Allemagne

Par [Patrick Saint-Paul](#) Mis à jour le 13/04/2012 à 22:37 | publié le 13/04/2012 à 16:42 [Réactions](#) (134)

### **L'organisation extrémiste «Die Ware Religion» veut distribuer 25 millions d'exemplaires du livre Saint en Allemagne, en Suisse et en Autriche.**

*De notre correspondant à Berlin*

L'[Allemagne](#) s'inquiète de la distribution gratuite du Coran à travers tout le pays à l'initiative d'un groupe d'extrémistes musulmans salafistes. Depuis octobre 2011, l'organisation «Die Ware Religion» (la vraie religion) a déjà distribué quelques 300.000 corans traduits dans la langue de Goethe outre-Rhin et s'est fixée pour objectif d'en diffuser 25 millions en Allemagne, en Autriche et en Suisse. Tous les partis politiques s'alarment alors qu'une nouvelle distribution de masse doit avoir lieu, ce samedi, dans 38 villes allemandes, dont Berlin, Hambourg, Kiel, Lübeck et Wiesbaden.

Le gouvernement et la classe politique dénoncent une exploitation du livre sacré à des fins extrémistes. Le chef du groupe parlementaire des Unions chrétiennes de la chancelière Angela Merkel, Volker Kauder, a «fermement condamné» cette initiative qui selon lui «exploite le Coran à des fins extrémistes» et a réclamé une enquête sur son mode de financement. Le parti libéral FDP, partenaire gouvernemental, juge «inexcusable» ces distributions qui «exploitent l'écriture sacrée comme moyen de propagande publicitaire au service de l'extrémisme». Serkan Tören, un porte parole du FDP, réclame l'extradition des «salafistes non-Allemands, qui violent la loi fondamentale».

#### **recruter de nouveaux militants**

Dans l'opposition, le Parti social-démocrate SPD a appelé à poursuivre la surveillance des salafistes. «Si les autorités relèvent qu'il y a violation du droit et de la loi, il s'agirait alors de réfléchir à une interdiction», a déclaré un porte-parole des sociaux-démocrates, Michael Hartmann. Il écarte cependant l'idée qu'«une simple action de distribution puisse transformer des hommes en terroristes». Des menaces proférées contre plusieurs journalistes dans une vidéo publiée sur Youtube ont déclenché l'émoi de la classe politique, qui y voit une atteinte à la liberté de la presse. Dans cette vidéo, retirée depuis, les journalistes sont qualifiés de «cochons» et de «singes». Une voix dit: «Nous savons où tu habites, nous connaissons ton club de football, nous avons ton numéro de téléphone mobile», selon le quotidien Die Welt.

L'auteur de cette action, Ibrahim Abou Nagie, un prédicateur et chef d'entreprise d'origine palestinienne de 47 ans installé à Cologne, explique vouloir «apporter la vérité dans le coeur des gens». Abou Nagie fait lui même l'objet d'une surveillance des autorités. Les services de renseignements allemands s'inquiètent de la montée du courant salafiste outre-Rhin. Ils estiment à 2500 le nombre de salafistes vivant en Allemagne. «La distribution d'exemplaires du Coran est couverte par la liberté religieuse, mais le mouvement qui se cache derrière continue de faire l'objet d'une surveillance», rappellent les autorités. Les services de renseignements jugent que la distribution du Coran n'est qu'un moyen détourné de recruter de nouveaux militants islamistes extrémistes. Pour Bodo Becker, un porte parole du ministère de l'Intérieur, les salafistes représentent une menace pour les libertés démocratiques fondamentales et cultivent un rapport ambigu à la violence.

## Folkerts-Landau ersetzt Mayer Die Deutsche Bank tauscht ihren Chefvolkswirt aus

FAZ 13.04.2012 · Der Deutsche-Bank Chefvolkswirt Thomas Mayer gilt als eigenständiger Kopf. Seine Analysen entsprachen nicht immer der Hausmeinung. Nun tritt er ab. Er wolle sich künftig mehr der Wissenschaft widmen, heißt es aus der Bank.

Der erst seit Anfang 2010 amtierende DB-Research-Leiter Thomas Mayer gibt die Position Ende Mai ab. Neuer Chefvolkswirt wird David Folkerts-Landau, der bisher schon Leiter des Global Market Research ist. Das teilte die Deutsche Bank am Freitag mit. Der scheidende Vorstandsvorsitzende Josef Ackermann spendete warme Worte zum Abschied. „Thomas Mayer ist ein hoch angesehener Ökonom und war während der Finanz- und Wirtschaftskrise für mich ein sehr geschätzter Berater.“ Er stehe der Bank und ihren Kunden auch weiterhin beratend zur Verfügung.

Folkerts-Landau, 62 Jahre alt, arbeitet seit 1997 für die Deutsche Bank und leitet seitdem die Researchabteilung für Aktien und Anleihen. „Unter seiner Ägide belegt die Deutsche Bank nun schon das zweite Jahr in Folge den ersten Platz in der entscheidenden Kundenerhebung Institutional Investor’s All-Europe Research Team“, betonte die Bank. Zuvor war Folkerts-Landau im Internationalen Währungsfonds (IWF) tätig und lehrte als Professor an der University of Chicago. Auch heute widmet er sich wissenschaftlicher Forschung und publiziert zu Währungssystemfragen. Der kommende Chefvolkswirt bemühte sich, seine Freundschaft mit dem alten herauszustellen. „Thomas und ich haben mehr als zwei Jahrzehnte beim IWF und bei der Deutschen Bank zusammengearbeitet.“ Er werde weiter von Mayers Rat profitieren.

Aus der Bank heißt es, Mayer selbst habe den Wunsch geäußert, sich mehr der Wissenschaft zu widmen. Er wolle sich daher aus Leitungsfunktionen zurückziehen. Allerdings ist aus Finanzkreisen auch zu hören, dass Mayers Prognosen gelegentlich zu Unstimmigkeiten mit der viel größeren Abteilung Market Research geführt hätten. Der 58 Jahre alte promovierte Ökonom gilt als eigenständiger Kopf. Seit 2002 arbeitet er für die Deutsche Bank, Anfang 2010 wurde er Nachfolger des langjährigen Chefvolkswirts Norbert Walter.

Zuweilen überraschte Mayer mit Prognosen und Einschätzungen, die nicht immer der Hausmeinung entsprachen. Wiederholt warnte er vor einem deutlichen Anstieg der Inflationsraten in ein paar Jahren, aufgrund der expansiven Geldpolitik in Amerika und Europa. Die Finanzkrise sieht er keineswegs als überwunden an. Anfang des Jahres warnte er öffentlich: „Falls das Vertrauen nicht zurückkehrt, könnte die nächste Stufe eine Krise des gesamten Geldsystems sein“. Die mögliche Folge wäre eine Hyperinflation.

Mayer ließ Zweifel an der Stabilität des Papiergeld-Standards erkennen. Die Flut billigen Geldes erfreue die Märkte kurzfristig, doch längerfristig gebe es neue Verzerrungen. Anders als sein Vorgänger Norbert Walter, der ein Euro-Enthusiast war, mischte Mayer auch kritische Töne ein. Als Folge einer verfehlten Euro-Rettungspolitik könne eine radikale Protestbewegung, eine „Tea Party“ in Deutschland, gegen eine Euro-Transferunion aufkommen, warnte er.

## Europe's Short Vacation

EconoMonitor Author: [Nouriel Roubini](#) · April 13th, 2012 · [Comments \(0\)](#) Share This Print 0 0

Since last November, the European Central Bank, under its new president, Mario Draghi, has reduced its policy rates and undertaken two injections of more than €1 trillion of liquidity into the eurozone banking system. This led to a temporary reduction in the financial strains confronting the debt endangered countries on the eurozone's periphery (Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Ireland), sharply lowered the risk of a liquidity run in the eurozone banking system, and cut financing costs for Italy and Spain from their unsustainable levels of last fall.

At the same time, a technical default by Greece was avoided, and the country implemented a successful – if coercive – restructuring of its public debt. A new fiscal compact – and new governments in Greece, Italy, and Spain – spurred hope of credible commitment to austerity and structural reform. And the decision to combine the eurozone's new bailout fund (the European Stability Mechanism) with the old one (the European Financial Stability Facility) significantly increased the size of the eurozone's firewall.

But the ensuing honeymoon with the markets turned out to be brief. Interest-rate spreads for Italy and Spain are widening again, while borrowing costs for Portugal and Greece remained high all along. And, inevitably, the recession on the eurozone's periphery is deepening and moving to the core, namely France and Germany. Indeed, the recession will worsen throughout this year, for many reasons.

First, front-loaded fiscal austerity – however necessary – is accelerating the contraction, as higher taxes and lower government spending and transfer payments reduce disposable income and aggregate demand. Moreover, as the recession deepens, resulting in even wider fiscal deficits, another round of austerity will be needed. And now, thanks to the fiscal compact, even the eurozone's core will be forced into front-loaded recessionary austerity.

Moreover, while über-competitive Germany can withstand a euro at – or even stronger than – \$1.30, for the eurozone's periphery, where unit labor costs rose 30-40% during the last decade, the value of the exchange rate would have to fall to parity with the US dollar to restore competitiveness and external balance. After all, with painful deleveraging – spending less and saving more to reduce debts – depressing domestic private and public demand, the only hope of restoring growth is an improvement in the trade balance, which requires a much weaker euro.

Meanwhile, the credit crunch in the eurozone periphery is intensifying: thanks to the ECB long-term cheap loans, banks there don't have a liquidity problem now, but they do have a massive capital shortage. Faced with the difficulty of meeting their 9% capital-ratio requirement, they will achieve the target by selling assets and contracting credit – not exactly an ideal scenario for economic recovery.

To make matters worse, the eurozone depends on oil imports even more than the United States does, and oil prices are rising, even as the political and policy environment is deteriorating. France may elect a president who opposes the fiscal compact and whose policies may scare the bond markets. Elections in Greece – where the recession is turning into a depression – may give 40-50% of the popular vote to parties that favor immediate default and exit from the eurozone. Irish voters may reject the fiscal compact in a referendum. And there are signs of austerity and reform fatigue both in Spain and Italy, where demonstrations, strikes, and popular resentment against painful austerity are mounting.

Even structural reforms that will eventually increase productivity growth can be recessionary in the short run. Increasing labor-market flexibility by reducing the costs of shedding workers will lead – in the short run – to more layoffs in the public and private sector, exacerbating the fall in incomes and demand.



Finally, after a good start, the ECB has now placed on hold the additional monetary stimulus that the eurozone needs. Indeed, ECB officials are starting to worry aloud about the rise in inflation due to the oil shock.

The trouble is that the eurozone has an austerity strategy but no growth strategy. And, without that, all it has is a recession strategy that makes austerity and reform self-defeating, because, if output continues to contract, deficit and debt ratios will continue to rise to unsustainable levels. Moreover, the social and political backlash eventually will become overwhelming.

That is why interest-rate spreads in the eurozone periphery are widening again now. The peripheral countries suffer from severe stock and flow imbalances. The stock imbalances include large and rising public and private debt as a share of GDP. The flow imbalances include a deepening recession, massive loss of external competitiveness, and the large external deficits that markets are now unwilling to finance.

Without a much easier monetary policy and a less front-loaded mode of fiscal austerity, the euro will not weaken, external competitiveness will not be restored, and the recession will deepen. And, without resumption of growth – not years down the line, but in 2012 – the stock and flow imbalances will become even more unsustainable. More eurozone countries will be forced to restructure their debts, and eventually some will decide to exit the monetary union.

## An Overdose of Pain

Spain could be the next European economy brought down by German-led mismanagement of the euro-zone crisis. It need not turn out that way. But it surely will unless Chancellor Angela Merkel and her political allies inside and outside Germany acknowledge that no country can pay off its debts by suffocating economic growth.

Austerity, the one-size-fits-all cure prescribed by Ms. Merkel, is not working anywhere. After weeks of misleading calm, and despite huge injections of liquidity by the European Central Bank, countries are slipping back into recession, unemployment is climbing and deficit forecasts are worsening. Bond markets are especially [jittery about Spain](#) and Italy, two of Europe's largest economies.

Spain is already wracked by a depression-level unemployment rate of nearly 25 percent (and approaching 50 percent for those ages 16 to 24). But it is in for even higher levels of misery under the austerity budget that Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy unveiled at the end of March, after the European Union rebuffed his pleas for more fiscal flexibility in the face of a worsening recession.

[Mr. Rajoy's budget](#) is supposed to slash last year's deficit of 8.5 percent of gross domestic product, to 5.3 percent this year and then 3.0 percent in 2013. The targets are likely unreachable, even if he rigorously keeps to his punishing budget. The most optimistic official estimates forecast the economy to shrink by nearly 2 percent this year. And the more Spain's G.D.P. contracts, the more tax receipts drop, requiring even steeper budget cuts. It is a destructive, ever downward cycle.

Each of Europe's struggling economies has different problems, calling for different remedies. Spain, for example, has one of Europe's lowest public-sector debt levels. But it does need to work off the private debt that went bad when its housing bubble burst and its weakened banks turned to the government for support. That swelled deficits to levels that cannot be sustained indefinitely. But attempting to bring them down too quickly in hard times could backfire, as Mr. Rajoy recognized when gloomy economic forecasts earlier led him to ask for a more realistic 2012 target of 5.8 percent of G.D.P. instead of the previously agreed 4.4 percent.

Instead of acceding to his sensible request, European finance ministers imposed a new target of 5.3 percent. Bond markets quickly figured out that Spain is unlikely to meet those targets. So lenders bid up interest rates for Spanish debt, making the target even more unrealistic.

With no good way to achieve the numbers, Mr. Rajoy has proposed a number of bad ones, like cutting back on the public investment needed to improve economic competitiveness and worker retraining funds needed to lubricate labor market reforms. He has now proposed a second round of deep cuts targeting schools and health care. Shortchanging tomorrow's work force to pay for yesterday's housing bubble makes no economic sense.

These damaging cuts could have been less severe if the European Union had heeded Mr. Rajoy's plea for greater short-term budgetary flexibility. They could be avoided if Ms. Merkel and her misguided partners would finally recognize that restoring the competitiveness of Europe's economically weakened south requires more investment in reform and growth and less obsessive targeting of short-term deficit arithmetic.

06.10.2008

## Frankfurter Allgemeine

### Zeitverschiebung: Uwe Tellkamps Dresden

Wer wissen will, auf welchen Wegen die Wirklichkeit in die Literatur gelangt, muss mit Uwe Tellkamp durch das Dresdner Villenviertel Weißer Hirsch spazieren gehen. Wo er als Kind gespielt hat, spielt nun sein neuer Roman, der hochgelobte „Turm“.

Von Andreas Platthaus



Foto: Christian Thiel

Ich komme aus Ostrom. Eben noch stand ich auf dem Astronautenweg, und über mir glitt die Kabine der Schwebebahn herab. Kein Mensch ist an diesem grauen Montagmorgen darin zu sehen. Hangaufwärts wird das Gusseisengestänge der Schienenführung immer steiler, die Trägerbögen ergänzen sich zum Skelett eines Urzeittiers. So ist in DDR-Zeiten die Nomenklatura von Dresden zu ihrem Refugium auf der Loschwitzhöhe transportiert worden, in jenes Viertel, das als Ostrom verspottet wurde. Abgeschottet durch die Armee, lebten dort der Bezirkssekretär Barsano, der Theaterautor und Dichter Eschschloraque, der Romancier Altberg oder der Akademiker Londoner - wenn man dem Roman „Der Turm“ glaubt, der hier im Osten von Dresden, dem schönsten Teil der Stadt, den größten Teil seiner Handlung ansiedelt. Sie erzählt über die letzten Jahre der DDR.

Diesem Buch möchte man alles glauben, so genau erzählt es. Ich habe vier Jahre in Dresden gelebt, hatte hier eine meiner bevorzugten Spaziergangstrecken und konnte deshalb bei der Lektüre jede Wegbiegung nachvollziehen, jeden Anstieg, jeden Ausblick. Doch schnell wird auch klar: „Der Turm“ verschiebt die Elemente dieses Wohnviertels, siedelt Häuser aus einer Straße in die andere um, legt Bergpfade an, wo es keine gibt, benennt Wege um, baut Brücken über Täler, setzt Inseln in die Elbe, ruft Menschen bei Namen, die nicht die ihren sind. Natürlich steckt hinter Barsano der einstige Bezirkssekretär Hans Modrow, in Eschschloraque ist Peter Hacks zu erkennen, und Altberg, das ist Franz Fühmann, Londoner dagegen Jürgen Kuczynski. In „Der Turm“ ist nichts, wie es scheint, und doch ist alles schlüssig, so schlüssig, dass ich in meinen Dresden-Büchern nach Bildern der Brücke über die Grundstraße gesucht habe, die im Roman beschrieben wird. Sie musste einfach dagewesen sein, doch es gab keine Spur von ihr.

#### Ardenne wird zu Arbogast

Vom Astronautenweg, der in Wahrheit Veilchenweg heißt, biege ich in die Grundstraße ein. Fünf Minuten Zeit sind noch, um die Kurve geht es herum und langsam aufwärts. Rechts steigt der Hang zum Villenviertel Weißer Hirsch an; dort oben hätte man die Brücke sehen müssen, die im Buch den schwerbewachten Zugang nach Ostrom darstellt. Bisweilen blitzt das helle Weiß des Luisenhofs auf, der im Roman Sibyllenhof heißt, davor der Turm der Villa San Remo, die als Rapallo firmiert, und dahinter liegt unsichtbar das riesige Areal des Instituts, das die DDR ihrem Physikgenie Manfred von Ardenne zur Verfügung stellte. Im „Turm“ heißt er Ludwig von Arbogast.

Am Körnerplatz wartet der Mann, der diese Topographie und diese Personen mit seinem Namenszauber belegt hat: Uwe Tellkamp. Unter seiner Führung will ich einen mir durch eigene Anschauung längst vertrauten Ort in Deckung bringen mit einer Phantasieszenerie, die mir nach tausend Seiten Lektüre wider besseres Wissen mindestens so realistisch vorkommt wie meine eigenen Erinnerungen. Wir sind verabredet am Durchgang zur Standseilbahn, die hoch auf den Weißen Hirsch fährt. Da steht ein junger Mann, nicht allzu groß, das schwarze Haar unter einer Schieberkappe, gekleidet in grüne Wanderkleidung, auf dem Rücken einen Rucksack, schweres Schuhwerk an den Füßen. Angesichts der Ausstaffierung überrascht es nicht, dass der Gedanke an eine Auffahrt, wie sie Christian Hoffmann, der jugendliche Held in Tellkamps Roman, am Beginn der Handlung mit der Standseilbahn macht, gar nicht erst aufkommt. „Sie kennen ja die Plattleite, also gehen wir den Reißweg hoch auf den Hirsch.“ Doch dann zögert er: „Nein, dann könnten Sie das Spinnwebhaus nicht sehen. Also doch die Plattleite.“

### **Der Wille zum Zauberberg**

Im Buch heißt sie Turmstraße und ist die zentrale Straße jenes bürgerlichen Viertels, dessen Bewohner sich danach die Türmer nennen. Sie leben verteilt auf die zwischen 1895 und 1910 gebauten Villen, deren Architekten sich bei allen Stilen der europäischen Baugeschichten bedient haben, um ein Märchenland hoch über der Elbe zu erschaffen. Roman und Wirklichkeit vermischen sich, denn es gibt diese eklektizistische Wunderwelt tatsächlich. Ihre Ausstattung gehorchte keiner Planung, hier konnte sich jeder finanzkräftige Bauherr seine Träume erfüllen, doch in der Liebe zum verwunschenen Detail und zur Einbettung der Häuser in die grandiose Hanglandschaft tritt zutage, was Uwe Tellkamp auf den Begriff bringt: „der Wille zum Zauberberg“.

Wir sind ein Stück die Plattleite hinaufgelaufen, da hält Tellkamp an einem steinernen Torbogen: „Dahinter geht es zum Spinnwebhaus. Als Kind war ich dort drin, und es war genauso, wie ich es im Buch beschreibe: die Bildergalerie, der seltsame Künstler. Hier vorne stand damals noch der Brunnenwels, der ist vor ein paar Jahren verschwunden.“ Er zeigt auf die Reste des originalen Mauerwerks im ausgebesserten Bogen, erinnert sich an die Eindrücke aus der Kindheit.

### **Die Illusion, der DDR-Tristesse zu entfliehen**

Die Familie ist 1977 auf den Weißen Hirsch gezogen, da war Uwe Tellkamp neun Jahre alt. Zuvor lebte sie in einem zehnstöckigen Plattenbau in der Dresdner Johannstadt. „Hätten meine Eltern nicht die Wohnung hier zugesprochen bekommen, dann hätten sie wohl einen Ausreiseantrag gestellt. Nicht aus Anspruchsdenken, sondern weil das der letzte Tropfen gewesen wäre, der das Fass zum Überlaufen gebracht hätte. Auf dem Weißen Hirsch konnte man sich der Illusion hingeben, der DDR-Tristesse zu entfliehen. Aber das war reine Illusion.“

Was mich an „Der Turm“ besonders fasziniert hat, ist das Porträt eines Bürgertums, das sich in die Kultur flüchtet, das die Zumutungen der Staatsideologie ignoriert und seine Werte auf Literatur und Musik gründet, die aus den Jahren vor der DDR stammen. So existierte in Ostdeutschland eine Schicht, für die Kultur ein Überlebensmittel war, und diese Ernsthaftigkeit im Umgang mit den Künsten ist nach 1989 beibehalten worden - unbeeinflusst von den Verlockungen von Popkultur oder bloßer Unterhaltung. Tellkamps Familie gehörte dazu, und man merkt ihm an, dass er sich aus der Zeit gefallen fühlt. „Heute wird gar nicht begriffen, was Romane leisten können. Dass sie einen Zugang zur Welt bieten, den Geschichtsbücher oder Philosophie gar nicht leisten können. Ich habe keine große Hoffnung für Bücher wie meines, die Zahl der Leser, die damit etwas anfangen können, wird immer kleiner.“

### **Große Feste allerorten**

Wir sind höher gewandert. Die Plattleite verläuft hier wie ein Hohlweg zwischen den Gartenterrassen der prunkvollen Anwesen. An der Wegbiegung, wo es rechts in die Weinleite hineingeht, eine kleine Stichstraße, die an der Strecke der Standseilbahn endet, weist Tellkamp auf eine Hofeinfahrt: „Hier gab es im Sommer große Feste. Es wurden Tische und Bänke herausgestellt, und man trug gewaltige Mengen

Speisen zusammen. Von überall her kam Musik aus den Häusern.“ Von solchen Feiern wird er noch oft erzählen auf unserem Marsch durch das Viertel.

Die Plattleite erreicht ihren steilsten Abschnitt, eine Treppe erleichtert den Aufstieg, doch wir bleiben auf dem Kopfsteinpflaster. Oben angekommen, stehen wir vor dem Ardenne-Institut, an der frisch renovierten Volkssternwarte. „Diese Existenz eines Barons, der sich im Sozialismus alles herausnehmen konnte, ist faszinierend. Ardenne war der Pate meiner Schulklasse, also kamen wir an seinem Geburtstag immer hierher, um ihm ein Ständchen zu bringen. So habe ich das Innere der Villa kennengelernt.“

### **Das geheime Siegel**

An der nächsten Kreuzung beginnt das Kerngebiet des Romans. Aus der Wolfshügelstraße ist darin die Wolfsleite geworden, und als wir hineingegangen sind, liegt schräg gegenüber auf der Ecke zur Collenbuschstraße das Vorbild für Haus Wolfsstein, ein gebautes Gebirge mit achteckigem turmartigen Anbau, der in Tellkamps Jugend „das Fagott“ genannt wurde - dabei ist es auch im Buch geblieben.

Links herab ist am Ende der Collenbuschstraße auf der Terrasse mit Elbaussicht, die in der DDR „Friedensblick“ hieß, bereits der Obelisk zu sehen. In der Mitte des alten Geländers vor ihm ist die Silhouette eines springenden Hirsches in ein Medaillon eingearbeitet: Reminiszenz an den Namen des Viertels. Im Buch ist an der Stelle statt des Hirsches eine Nautilusmuschel angebracht. „Das ist mein geheimes Siegel im Roman. Wenn es etwas gibt, was mir wichtiger ist als alles andere, dann sind es die Musikschallplatten, die ich in meiner Kindheit gehört habe. Ihre Spiralrillen tauchen da, zur Nautilusmuschel verformt, im Buch wieder auf.“

### **Eine halbe Seite für die Farbe**

Wie auch die Platten selbst, die im Roman zu regelrechten Duellen gegeneinander eingesetzt werden: die Interpretationen von Swjatoslaw Richter gegen die von Emil Gilels oder Westpressungen der Deutschen Grammophon gegen deren ostdeutsche Lizenzausgaben. Später auf unserem Weg wird Tellkamp von der Dame erzählen, die schräg gegenüber von seinem Elternhaus wohnte und bei offenem Fenster fleißig Bach am Klavier übte, was den böswilligen Knaben dazu verleitete, im Wohnzimmer Richters Einspielung des „Wohltemperierten Klaviers“ aufzulegen und bei voller Lautstärke über die Straße schallen zu lassen.

Doch noch sind wir am Obelisk, weit weg von der Oskar-Pietsch-Straße 9, wo Familie Tellkamp seinerzeit wohnte. Am Ende der Collenbuschstraße, bevor sie als Künzelmannstraße wieder hangaufwärts abknickt, liegt das Vorbild fürs Tausendaugenhaus, wo Meno Rohde, der Onkel von Christian Hoffmann, wohnt. Der im Buch geschilderte Wintergarten ist mittlerweile abgerissen, und das Gartenhaus steht in Wirklichkeit auf einem ganz anderen Anwesen. Die Villa selbst ist aufs schönste restauriert, doch Tellkamp zeigt auf ein unscheinbares Mauerstück am Rand des Bürgersteigs: „So sah früher der ganze Weiße Hirsch aus. Feuchte Wände mit abgeblättertem Putz - ein Anblick, den man kaum beschreiben kann, für den ich eine halbe Seite gebraucht habe, um nur die Farbe heraufzubeschwören.“

Hier ist die Pflanzenwelt immer dabei, die Häuser zu überwuchern. Noch in die schmiedeeisernen Gitter der Gärten haben die Architekten Ranken und Blüten einarbeiten lassen, als gäbe das Menschenwerk sich schon geschlagen.

### **Das typische Samstagmorgengeräusch**

Tellkamp blickt die Künzelmannstraße hoch, an deren Ende, Ecke Lahmannring, die Zentralschließfächer standen. Briefkästen für das ganze Viertel, damit der Postbote nicht zu jedem einzelnen Haus laufen musste. „Ich erinnere mich an das typische Samstagmorgengeräusch“, sagt er, „wenn am späten Vormittag die Männer in ihren Hausschuhen hier die Straße hochschlurften, während die Frauen das Mittagessen vorbereiteten - bei Bildungsbürgern kochten ja immer die Frauen. An den Schließfächern traf

man sich dann, und es wurde stundenlang geschwätzt. Das wurde der Parteiführung so unheimlich, dass die Briefe wieder den einzelnen Haushalten zugestellt wurden.“

Wir schlendern die Straße hoch, an dem Jugendstilhaus vorbei, das in „Der Turm“ den Namen Elefant trägt: nach der rüsselartigen Balkonfront auf der vorderen Ecke. In den Phantasienamen des Buchs ist die Faszination des jungen Uwe Tellkamp aufgehoben, eines Kindes, das hier in der Ruhe des Villenviertels zwischen den verfallenden Gebäuden eine verwunschene Welt erlebte, wie man sie nur aus den Märchen von Wilhelm Hauff oder Tausendundeiner Nacht kennt.

### **Letzter Gruß aus der Vergangenheit**

Am Lahmannring gehen wir an den alten Russenresidenzen vorbei. „Niemand hätte sich je mit denen eingelassen. Das waren für uns Besatzer.“ Auf der anderen Seite der Bautzner Straße liegt das alte Sanatorium, das mittlerweile fast verfallen ist. Auch das gehörte den Russen. Darin gab es einen Laden namens „Magasin“, und Tellkamp erinnert sich, dass man in ihm Lebensmittel kaufen konnte, die es sonst nirgendwo gab.

Dann ist die Oskar-Pietsch-Straße erreicht, wo rechts, im ersten Stock der Nummer 9, die Familie von Uwe Tellkamp wohnte. Ein wenig Fachwerk im Giebfeld, großer eingebauter Balkon, ein von einer Säule gestützter Eingang - das ist das Haus Karavelle aus „Der Turm“. Tellkamp schaut nicht auf die Klingelschilder der heutigen Bewohner, aber dass vor der Tür noch die Lampe hängt, die sein Vater dort aufgehängt hat, das berührt ihn. Ein letzter Gruß aus der Vergangenheit.

### **Die Finger des Cellisten**

Auf der anderen Straßenseite liegt das Haus Abendstern, wo seinerzeit Tellkamps Onkel wohnte, der dem Schwager 1977 den Hinweis gab, dass gegenüber eine Etage frei geworden war. Als Chirurg und Vater von zwei Kindern durfte dieser sich gute Chancen ausrechnen, doch es waren gute Beziehungen zur kommunalen Wohnungsverwaltung und einige Begünstigungen nötig, um sich das neue Heim tatsächlich zu sichern.

Uwe Tellkamp, der in dieser Straße lebte, bis er 1986 zur Nationalen Volksarmee eingezogen wurde, hat zu jedem Haus Geschichten parat, kennt alle früheren Bewohner, die mittlerweile aber größtenteils weggezogen sind, weil die meisten Villen an Alteigentümer aus dem Westen zurückgegeben wurden. In einem unscheinbaren Haus um die Ecke in der Zwanzigerstraße lebte früher ein Cellist der Dresdner Staatskapelle, dem die Stasi beim Verhör die Finger gebrochen hat.

### **Die Eckpfeiler der Kindheit**

Über Berglehne und Sonnenleite geht es zurück zum Reißweg, den wir schon am Beginn der Oskar-Pietsch-Straße gekreuzt hatten. Dort war früher die Schneiderei Harmonie, und auf der anderen Seite gibt es immer noch die Bäckerei Walther, deren Semmeln im „Turm“ buchstäblich besungen werden. Tellkamp tritt ein und kauft mir eine. Sie ist gut, aber den Vergleich mit den früher billiger verkauften „Lehrlingsbrötchen“, die besonders geschätzt wurden, halten sie für Tellkamp nicht aus. Vor der staunenden Verkäuferin, einer jungen Frau, die 1989 gerade einmal geboren gewesen sein dürfte, beschwört er die alte Backstube herauf. Er erinnert jedes Detail. Das ist keine Ostalgie, sondern Rückkehr zu den Eckpfeilern einer Kindheit - so wie auch „Der Turm“ nie in Gefahr gerät, ein sentimentales Bild von der DDR zu zeichnen.

Dann laufen wir den Reißweg hinab, der in weitem Bogen der Grundstraße unten im Tal zwischen Weißer Hirsch und Loschwitzhöhe zustrebt. Vor dem letzten, steilsten Stück ist der Weg gesperrt, wir umgehen die Barrikade und sind auf der alten Abfahrtsstrecke der beiden Tellkamp-Brüder, die sich im Winter auf 2,20 Meter langen Skiern mit Stahlkanten und in geliehenen Skistiefeln hier herabgestürzt haben. „Wir

waren wahnsinnig“, lacht Tellkamp und krepelt das linke Hosenbein hoch, um eine Narbe zu zeigen, die zurückblieb, als sein jüngerer Bruder einen Draht quer über die Strecke gespannt hatte.

### **Triumph des Romanciers**

In der Grundstraße erzähle ich ihm von meiner Verwirrung, die er durch die Schilderung der gar nicht vorhandenen Brücke ausgelöst hatte - und da stößt er ein tief befriedigtes „Ja“ hervor, Triumph des Romanciers, der selbst einem Ortskundigen seine Vision aufzwingt. Ein alter Heimatforscher, mit dem er bei seinen Recherchen für das Buch immer wieder zusammengearbeitet hat, habe ihm kürzlich eine Postkarte aus den dreißiger Jahren zugeschickt, auf der genau an der Stelle, wo er die Brücke imaginiert hatte, eine eingezeichnet war: Modell eines Prestigebaus der Nationalsozialisten, der nie zustande gekommen ist. Für Tellkamp war das die Bestätigung, dass seine Phantasie glaubwürdig geraten war.

Ansonsten gibt es für alles reale Vorbilder. Auf die Frage, warum er bisweilen Namen ändere, dann aber auch wieder nicht, antwortet er, dass dies eine Frage der Bedeutung der jeweiligen Figuren sei: „Wenn sie eine wichtige Rolle spielen, wurden die Namen geändert. Werden sie dagegen nur erwähnt, habe ich alles gelassen, wie es tatsächlich war.“ So wird denn auch einmal, auf Seite 716, ein Mediziner namens Tellkamp im Roman erwähnt. „Ja, das war mein Onkel. So wirkt das Ganze authentischer, und außerdem kann ich allen Lesern, die behaupten, ich erzählte nur autobiographisch und Christian wäre mein Alter Ego, antworten: Wieso? Da habt ihr doch den Namen Tellkamp im Buch. Und der hat mit den Hoffmanns gar nichts zu tun.“

Am Schluss, nach drei Stunden Wanderung, kehren wir am anderen Elbufer in der „Villa Marie“ gleich am Blauen Wunder ein. Morgen hat er seine erste Lesung aus „Der Turm“ in Dresden. „Die macht mir Sorgen“, gibt er zu. „Die Dresdner sind so stolz auf ihre Stadt, die werden mir meine Rede von ‚der süßen Krankheit Gestern‘, an der die hiesige Gesellschaft leidet, wohl übelnehmen.“ Doch das Erbe dieser Stadt im Leben Tellkamps hat in dem Roman nach mehr als zwanzig Jahren Vorbereitung endlich seine Form gefunden. „Schon in meinem Armeetagebuch von 1986“, so hat er mir erzählt, „findet sich der Titel ‚Der Turm‘ - als Synonym für Rückzug, Widerstand, eine herausragende Position, aber auch für die Sprachenverwirrung, wie sie der Turmbau zu Babel hervorgebracht hat. Denn das ist die DDR ja auch gewesen: ein Staat, in dem man sich gegenseitig nicht mehr verstand.“ Jenseits des Flusses liegen die Elbhänge, die das Andenken an diese unverständige Gesellschaft fortan für immer literarisch bewahren werden.

## Who Gets to Be French?

By *KARL E. MEYER*

THE French language is justly renowned for its clarity and precision. Yet on a seemingly simple matter its speakers stumble into a fog — who or what can be defined as French? The question arose afresh in the wake of the Toulouse killings. No one doubted that the perpetrator was 23-year-old [Mohammed Merah](#), a native son of Algerian descent. But was Mr. Merah French?

Impossible, declared four members of Parliament belonging to President Nicolas Sarkozy's center-right party. In a joint statement, they insisted that Mr. Merah "had nothing French about him but his identity papers."

Nonsense, retorted the left-wing journal *Libération*: "Merah is certainly a monster, but he was a French monster." A childhood friend of Mr. Merah provided a poignant elaboration: "Our passports may say that we are French, but we don't feel French because we were never accepted here. No one can excuse what he did, but he is a product of French society, of the feeling that he had no hope and nothing to lose. It was not Al Qaeda that created Mohammed Merah. It was France."

These opposing approaches to what it means to be French — one rooted in an uncompromising ideal of assimilation, the other grounded in the messy realities of multiculturalism — struck a chord with me. While researching a book on the politics of diversity with my wife, Shareen Blair Brysac, I encountered not only the exclusionary attitude prevailing in metropolitan Paris, but also the more tolerant worldview epitomized by the port city of Marseille — a worldview that the rest of France would be well served to embrace.

To exclusionists, the test of French-ness is straightforward: have you relinquished any other identity you might have had? As articulated by President Sarkozy in 2011: "If you come to France, you accept to melt into a single community, which is the national community, and if you do not want to accept that, you are not welcome in France. We have been too concerned with the identity of the person who was arriving, and not enough about the identity of the country that was receiving him."

It's an old conundrum. From the days of the Jacobins to today's Fifth Republic, lawmakers have differed strenuously as to whether nationality should be determined by birth, parentage, length of residency or assimilation. The French scholar Patrick Weil has noted that France has changed its nationality laws "more often and more significantly than any other democratic nation."

How does one become a citizen of the exclusionists' France? By knowing its cultural references and intricate folkways, as described in 1969 by the writer Sanche de Gramont: "The Frenchman is not someone who possesses a navy blue passport and speaks the language of Descartes, but someone who knows who broke the Soissons vase, what happened to Buridan's donkey, why Parmentier gave his name to a hash, and why Charles Martel saved Christendom." (Ironically, in 1977, Mr. de Gramont changed his name to Ted Morgan and became a United States citizen.)

The effects of this exclusionary mindset are palpable. France today has Europe's largest Islamic minority, making up nearly 10 percent of its population. Yet Muslims remain a people apart, as documented in 2011 by a research team recruited by the Open Society Institute. "In France," one researcher summarized, "you can be of any descent, but if you are a French citizen you cannot be an Arab." Composite identities like Arab-French are, he added, "ideologically impossible."



Hence the contrast one experiences in Marseille, France's second largest city. Its 840,000 inhabitants include an estimated 240,000 Muslims (more than any other European city). Yet it is famously welcoming. Here, as we were told by Jean Roatta, a politician representing the port's upscale central district, "you're Marseillais before you are French." In the fall of 2005, as ethnically charged riots consumed Parisian suburbs and spread to scores of other cities and towns, peace prevailed in Marseille. It's still a long way from being a multicultural Eden (jobless Muslims credibly complain that they experience discrimination), but this second city still points the way in its welcoming civility.

Why? Doubtless, fine weather and abundant beaches help maintain a tranquil atmosphere, but the chief reason is that it has for centuries been a magnet for immigrants. And its minorities are not geographically ghettoized in suburbs but rather integrated into Marseille's daily life. Just as important, successive mayors have bent the rules to provide special job, housing and political benefits to newcomers. Moreover, there's the bonding power of its popular soccer team, [Olympique de Marseille](#), which includes many players of African origin, and the salutary effect of its trademark cultural product: rap. Rap reached France in the 1980s, and almost instantly immigrant youths in Marseille vented their melancholy and frustration in verses salted with local slang.

Can and should the Marseillais spirit of civilized tolerance spread northward? My wife and I were reminded that it was a throng of volunteers singing a melody as they marched to Paris from already polyglot Marseille who gave France its national anthem, "La Marseillaise." Nobody then asked the marchers if they knew what happened to Buridan's donkey.

Karl E. Meyer, a former member of the New York Times editorial board, is a co-author of "Pax Ethnica: Where and How Diversity Succeeds."

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## Fear of Honor Killings

### Immigrants Flee Families to Find Themselves

By Antje Windmann

Hundreds of young female immigrants are hiding from their families in Germany after fleeing oppression, physical violence and even death threats. Charities and social workers help the women get new identities and build independent lives for themselves, but the risk of revenge from honor-obsessed relatives remains.

Bahar ran away early on a winter morning, one-and-a-half years after her mother was murdered. She helped her younger siblings get ready for school, and then she gave them a goodbye kiss on the forehead. Her uncle and her brothers were still sleeping. Bahar tiptoed out of the apartment in her socks, walked down the stairs and out the door. And then she ran for her life.

Today Bahar is 26 and likes to wear high-heeled shoes. She has chosen a popular café in a small city as a meeting point. She is wearing a modest amount of makeup, and her black hair is pulled back into a bun. She smiles tentatively and introduces herself, using the name in her new passport, which, for her protection, cannot be used in this article.

Bahar's family came to Germany from Iraq in 1996. They lived in the eastern city of Halle an der Saale for the first two years, in an apartment in a high-rise building with a dingy kitchen. Her father felt that most jobs were beneath him, beat his wife and "put out cigarettes on her skin," says Bahar. The father would sometimes disappear for months at a time. Bahar suspects that he was involved in criminal activities. "Everything was always peaceful without him. We even had a picnic in the park once," says Bahar. She took along some of the photos from that day when she ran away, but she can't bear to look at them, she says.

During those happy times, when she was alone with her six children, Bahar's mother came to the conclusion that she wanted to separate from her despotic husband. She went to the local town hall with Bahar to get information about German divorce law. When the father found out about it, he took a knife and locked himself in the bedroom with his wife on a summer night in 2003. Bahar holds up her hands to show us two scars: the evidence of her attempt to save her mother.

With the mother dead and the father sentenced to life in prison, an uncle took control of Bahar and her five siblings. He managed to make a caring and thoughtful impression on the youth welfare office, but it was deceptive. He used to turn up the music before he began beating the children. Bahar used makeup to hide the bruises. "I wasn't allowed to read books, and I couldn't even go out on the balcony anymore," she says. "Just cook, do the laundry and clean."

Bahar endured her life as a virtual slave for a year and a half. "Then I knew that I would either kill myself or leave."

#### Living in Fear

Germany in the 21st century, almost 60 years after the first guest workers arrived, is a country in which hundreds of female immigrants like Bahar live in hiding from their families. They have left everything behind: their home, their friends and their relatives. They refuse to abandon hope and allow themselves to be broken by the incompatibility of their own wishes with the expectations of their family and social

environment. They don't want to conform to the traditional values of the regions where their families come from. Instead, they want to live like women in Western societies: free, independent and emancipated.

Every year Papatya, a Berlin aid organization, takes in 60 girls and young women who have run away from their families because of cultural conflict, and who had faced the prospect of abduction, forced marriage or even death. The Rose Shelter in Stuttgart receives 80 applications a year from women who have suffered in these ways. The youth help organization Yasemin documents about 400 consultation visits, while the website Sibel receives more than 300 calls for help each year. The organization Peri e.V. claims to have helped about 50 girls and women run away from their families since 2008.

The list of the female immigrants' countries of origin is long. It includes Turkey, Kosovo, Albania, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran and India. A few months ago, a man from Sri Lanka poured boiling water over his daughter in a town in Germany. She had refused to accept a forced marriage.

Bahar fled to a women's shelter, but she was still afraid. "I saw my uncle on every street corner," she says. If someone on the bus seemed suspicious to her, she would get off at the next stop, holding a can of pepper spray in her hand. Bahar has moved to four different places since she ran away, and today she lives in a small city. She finished high school and entered a vocational training program, and she is currently in the process of getting her driver's license.

But despite her new freedoms, Bahar is still being held prisoner by her family. She has to lie to people, even those close to her, including friends, neighbors and coworkers. Anyone who learns about her past and her real name could pose a threat to her. Bahar doesn't allow anyone into her "fortress," as she calls her apartment -- not even her German boyfriend.

"He was surprised that my parents are so tolerant, but that I never visit them. He sensed that I was hiding something," says Bahar, lowering her head. When she still refused to confide in him, after being together for six months, he ended the relationship.

### **Family Was Not Very Religious**

While Bahar is alone with her secret, Mariam, a 28-year-old woman of Lebanese descent, can share hers with her boyfriend Thomas, 34. Three-and-a-half years ago, they fled from Mariam's family together, but today they live in constant fear of discovery and the likely consequences. "One of my relatives was shot by her husband, because she had left him," says Mariam. "My family felt that it was the right thing to do."

She is a quiet young woman with dark eyes and a smooth complexion, but she has reddish blotches on her neck, probably a sign of her agitation. "If my family finds us, we're dead," she says.

Mariam was three years old when her family moved to Germany from Lebanon. She has 11 siblings. The girls' lives were controlled by rules and prohibitions. She says that her father gambled away her oldest sister in a card game when she was 14 or 15. "In our world, they put a ring on your finger and a chain around your neck, and your future is sealed," Mariam explains.

It wasn't because of their religion, Islam, because the family wasn't very religious. They never prayed, and she wasn't required to wear a veil.

Mariam's case shows that the fact that a family doesn't pray, fast or require its female members to wear a headscarf is no indication of liberality in family matters. Archaic traditions and patriarchal ways of thinking do not grant women free will, explains Jan Kizilhan, 46, a psychology professor and ethnologist in the southwestern German city of Freiburg. According to Kizilhan, extended families who are poorly integrated into German society have a "collective understanding" about what women are permitted to do and what is considered dishonorable behavior. "This understanding structures and regulates communal

life." Kizilhan has served as a court-appointed expert, sometimes in honor killing trials, for the last 15 years.

The behavioral rules he mentions stem from a time when there was no police and no rule of law in many of the immigrants' regions of origin, so that patriarchs fashioned their own laws in the villages. "In some families, these rules are passed on, without thinking, from generation to generation," says Kizilhan, "and religion is wrongly used to legitimize them."

### **Number of Killings May Be Underestimated**

If a woman violates a traditional norm with her behavior, she damages the reputation of the entire family, the ethnologist explains. Reputation is elementary in these societies, in which women are treated as the property of men. People don't like to do business with a man who doesn't have his women under control, because he is seen as weak and unreliable.

He can make up for such a flaw by buying his way out of his disgrace, or by chastising the woman in a way that is visible to everyone. "There are clear courses of action" for this manner of reestablishing honor when it has supposedly been violated, Kizilhan explains. In the most extreme cases, they include honor killings, which Kizilhan considers "a social and not a religious phenomenon."

According to an estimate by the United Nations, at least 5,000 girls and women worldwide are murdered in the name of honor each year. In a study commissioned by Germany's Federal Criminal Police Office, criminologists with the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law identified seven to 10 so-called honor killings in Germany per year. The authors of the study examined 78 cases from 1996 to 2005.

But Kizilhan, who published a book about honor killings in 2006, believes that the number is "undoubtedly higher." He is very critical of the Max Planck study, saying: "The researchers didn't examine inexplicable and hidden murders, nor did they look into alleged suicides, accidents and missing person reports."

### **'I'll Run Away with You'**

The day on which Mariam, the young Lebanese woman, put her life in danger was the day she fell in love with Thomas, her boss at the fast-food restaurant where she worked. He had already noticed how her brothers would bring her to work every day and pick her up at the end of her shift. He sensed that she was suffering at home. At some point he said to her: "When the moment arrives and you want to go, I'll run away with you."

The moment arrived in November 2008, after they had been secretly in love for a year. Mariam's brother had married and, in return, the father of the bride wanted Mariam to marry his son. He had visited the family to select a bride for his son and, after examining her from head to toe, including her behavior and the way she moved, he chose Mariam. But she refused the offer, incurring the wrath of her family.

When Mariam told him what had happened, says Thomas, he thought about it for three minutes. First he found a spot for her in a women's shelter in another city, and then he threw some clothes into a plastic bag and went into hiding at a relative's house. That same afternoon, Mariam's and Thomas's phones rang at almost the same time.

"They told me I was a slut and that they would kill me," Mariam says quietly as she describes the calls.

The couple was reunited after four weeks. Mariam couldn't sleep and was constantly panic-stricken. To be closer to her, Thomas moved into a homeless shelter, because he lacked the funds for anything else. His best friend had been beaten up because he couldn't tell his attackers where Thomas and Mariam were.

The aid organization Terre des Femmes initially provided the couple a room in a safe house. Then a social worker offered them the use of his vacation house in the forest. They lived there for more than a year, their thoughts permeated by Mariam's family. They were terrified that any contact with other people could lead to their discovery -- and of what would happen to them next.

## **Forbidden Love**

That was what happened to Arzu Özmen, an 18-year-old woman from Detmold in northwestern Germany, a few months ago.

The young woman, a member of the Yazidi religious community, was found on the edge of a golf course in the northern state of Schleswig-Holstein on Jan. 13. According to the forensic report, she was killed with two shots to the head. Eleven weeks earlier, Özmen's siblings had abducted her from the apartment of her 23-year-old German boyfriend, Alexander.

Özmen's story of forbidden love and the unsuccessful attempt to get away is as tragic as it is typical.

Özmen's attorney still remembers their first encounter very clearly. It was on Sept. 12, 2011. "She came into my office and said: 'Hello, I would like to change my name.'" She was calm but emphatic, says the lawyer, a specialist in family law who chooses to remain anonymous. "She warned me right away that anyone who advocated on her behalf could expect to receive a visit from her family." It was clear to the attorney that she would have to take a number of detours to get Özmen a new identity -- and erase all traces that could lead to the young woman.

The biggest problem was Özmen's older sister S., who worked for the Detmold city administration. Her job gave her access to internal information. She could have used the address of the law firm to track down Özmen's whereabouts. To avoid that, the attorney asked a colleague in Oberhausen, around 100 miles (160 kilometers) away, to request Özmen's birth certificate in Detmold.

The Oberhausen attorney had hardly submitted the request before S., the sister, contacted his office and suggested that he arrange a meeting with Arzu.

## **New Identity**

Özmen's attorney found a civil registry office in the Westphalia region that recognized the gravity of the situation. Özmen went to the office and presented the documents that had been sent from Detmold to the law firm in Oberhausen. She also filed a criminal complaint against her family and submitted a statement from her attorney, in which she described how dangerous Özmen's situation was.

"The girl was a German citizen. She had been naturalized at the age of three," explains the registrar. "This meant that she could change her name retroactively to conform with German law." Article 47 of the Introductory Act to the German Civil Code makes this possible.

In her new life, Arzu Özmen wanted to be called Emily, Emily Ostermann. She changed her appearance, cutting her hair and dyeing it blonde.

To ensure that the Detmold authorities would not be notified, the registrar, at Özmen's request, added a restriction note to her file. Under German law, this is permissible if the civil registry office is aware of circumstances indicating that the individual in question could be in mortal danger if the information in the file is disclosed. Özmen picked up her new documents a few days before she was abducted.

Özmen was doomed because her desire to see her boyfriend ultimately outweighed her fear. To be with him, she checked out of the women's shelter on the night of Oct. 31.

Three of her siblings have now been indicted for murder and are awaiting trial. So far, they have not revealed which one of them killed Arzu.

### **'Everything Went Down the Tubes'**

Sobair O. from Hamburg is serving a life sentence for a so-called honor killing.

He was eight when he came to Germany with his family. His parents' marriage had been part of a bartering arrangement, says O., who is now 27. When his mother's brother married a woman, her brother was given O.'s mother in return.

He dropped out of a training program in retail sales after serving two weeks in a youth detention facility, because he didn't want to ask his employer to take him back. "I didn't want to go there and bow my head," says O. "That's not what we do." It's an attitude that explains much of what happened after that.

On May 15, 2008, O. killed his 16-year-old sister Morsal. He stabbed her more than 20 times with a jackknife, because she wanted to live like a German girl. Morsal bled to death at the scene.

The judge presiding over the case at a Hamburg court called it a "killing out of pure intolerance," an act motivated by wounded honor. When he delivered the verdict, O.'s family ran riot in the courtroom.

When O., now in prison, talks about Morsal today, his eyes fill with tears. But it's difficult to tell whether he is weeping for his dead sister or himself.

What happened? He shrugs his shoulders. "When I moved away from home, everything went down the tubes. Suddenly she was hanging out with strange people."

### **'Fix This!'**

According to O., the parents took Morsal to an aunt in Afghanistan in March 2007. "They wanted her to learn how a woman should behave," he says. According to O., Morsal told him that the father had tied a headscarf around her head while they were still on the plane. His mother had allegedly said that the girl would have to marry and have five children before she could come home.

Morsal was kept in Afghanistan for an entire year. "She kept calling me and begging me to come and get her. She was sad that no one could speak German with her," says O. When he learned that Morsal was to be married off in Afghanistan, he says, he fought for her and convinced his parents to bring her back to Germany. His mother apparently agreed, but told him that it would be his responsibility to ensure "that she doesn't cause us any more trouble."

But once she was back in Germany, Morsal returned to living her life the way she preferred. Sometimes she didn't come home for days, and she stole from him and their parents, O. claims. "My mother used to call me on my mobile phone two or three times a day and scream: Where is Morsal? Fix this! Everyone is talking about us. You're getting to be just like the Germans."

O. lowers his voice, almost to a whisper. "We knew that she had a boyfriend. But in our society, a girl just can't do that."

### **'I Had No Right to Kill Her'**

And then there were the gossiping acquaintances, who claimed that Morsal was turning tricks.

Those claims proved to be disastrous -- for Morsal, for O. and for the entire family. O. asked a cousin to lure Morsal into meeting him.

They had sat on the curb, as O. recalls, drinking Cokes and smoking cigarettes.

Then, according to O., the cousin asked her: "Is it true that you're turning tricks?"

"That's none of your goddamn business," Morsal supposedly responded.

All he remembers, says O., is that was when he reached into his pocket. He turned himself in to the police the next day.

O. looks at his hands. "Yes, I wanted to protect the family honor at the time," he says. "Today I know that even if she had been turning tricks, I had no right to kill her."

In the Morsal case, the court stressed that the parents, who were not charged with a crime, carried "a high moral share of the blame." Morsal's father was convicted of mistreatment of a ward and given a suspended sentence.

### **The High Cost of a New Identity**

How does one protect female immigrants from the morals, rules and persecution of their families? Johannes M., a 53-year-old social worker, looks after more than a dozen female immigrants who have fled from their families and are now living under new identities. For his own safety, he doesn't want his full name to be published.

Some time ago, M. organized an exhibition on the subject of victim protection at a school center in the western state of North Rhine-Westphalia. "After that, many young women from immigrant families contacted me to tell me that they couldn't stand it at home anymore." Whenever this happens, he says, he first tries to assess the level of suffering to which the girls are in fact subjected, and whether an intervention could help or would only exacerbate the situation.

If fleeing is the only option, the social worker figures that it will take three months to iron out all the formalities. "The funding is always the biggest problem," says M. For instance, he points out, a day in a residential facility costs about €200 (\$260). "Almost all protective facilities will only accept someone once the youth welfare or social services department has approved the costs," says M. For this reason, an intensive investigation by the authorities is often required.

In major cities with large immigrant populations, like Berlin, the youth welfare agencies are now more attuned to the problem than in more rural areas. But even in the German capital, the amount of assistance the girls are likely to receive often depends on whether their caseworkers are knowledgeable about the problem.

Much is at the discretion of the agencies. If a woman seeking protection isn't a German citizen yet, she can obtain a new identity relatively easily in the course of naturalization. However, the German states do not document how many new identities are issued nationwide each year.

Once all the red tape has been taken care of, social worker Johannes M. sets up an escape date. On the appointed day, he sits in his car, with the engine running, and waits for the endangered woman to come running out. He often drives hundreds of kilometers to bring his charges to relative safety. He knows that her family, the men in particular, will doggedly search for the woman. To discover the renegade's whereabouts, people are threatened and bribed, and sometimes members of the extended family even distribute wanted posters nationwide.

### **Learning Life Skills**

Eva K. experiences the extremes that the families will go to in their quests on an almost daily basis. As the director of the Papatya aid organization at the Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf youth welfare office, she

once witnessed how three men suddenly stormed into the office, grabbed a young Lebanese woman and took her with them. "No one dared to stop them. We spent half a year searching for her. She never resurfaced."

Living with a new identity, without family and friends, is a cruel burden. "They're all very compliant girls who try to please everyone," says K. "They're often distraught over the fact that they, of all people, can't stand this life." They are also tormented by the realization that their parents' sense of honor is greater than the love for their daughters. One in two of the women was threatened with forced marriage, says K., while one in five had told her about honor killings among their relatives.

Many of the escapees struggle with their new freedom. "After all, they were brought up in systems that deliberately kept them dependent," says K. After spending some time at Papatya, they often move into managed group homes or women's residential facilities first. "Many have to learn important life skills, such as dealing with money," says the social worker.

The degree of oppression in which the girls or women lived before they escaped depends on two factors: how poorly the family was integrated into Western culture, and how many brothers kept watch over them. In many cases, K. explains, the male siblings' role is to guarantee "that their sisters don't do anything that could harm the family honor."

### **Pressure on the Men**

In his research, Jan Kizilhan, the Freiburg-based psychologist, has observed a tremendous "social pressure on the fathers and the sons." For a study titled "Socialization and Beliefs in So-called Honor Killings," he interviewed 21 men of Turkish descent who had been arrested for honor killings in Germany. Kizilhan's conclusion is that very few of these men exhibit the typical traits of a killer or a violent criminal. Most of them, he says, came under pressure from fathers, mothers or the community. Men with little education who were victims of violence themselves are especially likely to be potential killers, says Kizilhan. And if fanaticism is also a factor in the social environment, the threat of honor killings is particularly high, according to Kizilhan.

In 1994, Germany's Federal Court of Justice ruled that honor killings were to be classified as murders for "base motives." According to the court, German legal and moral concepts are to be applied, and not those of an ethnic group that does not recognize German norms.

The study by the Max Planck Institute for the Federal Office of Criminal Investigation demonstrates that a large number of judges do not agree with the 1994 Federal Court of Justice decision. According to the study, honor as a motive is considered a mitigating circumstance in 25 percent of cases. In about 40 percent of the cases examined, the court did not even address the question of whether honor constituted a base motive.

Gunter Widmaier, a criminal attorney in the southwestern city of Karlsruhe, where the Federal Court of Justice is located, sees this behavior as evidence of trepidation on the part of some judges "to call a spade a spade, because they want to avoid appeals." The unsatisfactory result, says Widmaier, is that the reality behind many crimes is not recognized, and as a result it is underestimated how widespread certain social phenomena are.

### **The End of Misplaced Tolerance?**

This makes a verdict that was pronounced by the district court in the western German town of Kleve in December 2009, in the case of the murder of Gülsüm S., all the more remarkable. The 20-year-old woman of Kurdish descent had been beaten to death with branches by her triplet brother. Her face was so badly damaged that she was almost unidentifiable. The court reached a unique verdict: It convicted both



Gülsüm's brother and her father of murder, even though the father had not been directly involved in the crime.

Does the Kleve verdict mark the end of years of misplaced tolerance on the part of the German judiciary? Psychology professor Kizilhan hopes that the ruling will at least send a message because, in his view, it is clear that more acts of violence will be committed in the name of honor in Germany "in the next 10 to 15 years." "We are dealing with a battle of the immigrant generations that remains invisible to outsiders," says Kizilhan. The second and third generations, he explains, are still using the old values to remain in control. "At the same time, more and more female family members are rebelling against this."

Kizilhan is pinning his hopes on prevention. He believes that the police should keep a close eye on families with a history of violence and oppression. "If the officers make it clear to the patriarch that they're watching him, he'll shy away from beating his daughter or wife, not to mention killing them."

Other experts want to see the structures changed. One such measure would be to make kindergarten attendance mandatory for immigrants, so that their sons and daughters are familiarized with the liberal ways of the West at an early age. Another would be for municipalities to employ more immigrants, who could then improve cultural competency in local administrations.

Bilkay Öney, the integration minister in the southwestern state of Baden-Württemberg, would also like to help women who were brought from other countries to Germany for forced marriages. These women, says Öney, a member of the center-left Social Democrats who is herself of Turkish descent, should be granted a separate legal status after less than the current three-year waiting period. Otherwise, she explains, they have no way of freeing themselves from a violent situation. "If the family believes that they have stained its honor by separating from their husbands, often they are no longer able to return."

The most appropriate solution, says Yasemin Karakaoglu, a professor of intercultural education at the University of Bremen, would be dual citizenship. "It doesn't just promote integration," she argues. "It would also have a positive impact on aid and support programs for girls and women. After an abduction, for example, it would create the legal basis to be able to bring the victims back to Germany."

The advantages of dual citizenship are evident in Britain, where women can turn to a "Forced Marriage Unit" for help. It is made up of employees of the Foreign Office and Home Office, as well as social organizations. If a young woman with a UK passport is abducted to another country, the unit notifies the British embassy in that country. It then searches for the missing woman and, with the help of security personnel, ensures that she is returned to the UK.

### **Confident Enough to Go Out Alone**

Mariam and Thomas often talk about which of the two gave up more for the other one. They were married last week and want to start their own family.

Mariam talks about the "real home" that they now have, a two-room apartment somewhere in Germany. The furniture is from an estate sale, they've painted the walls in warm colors, and there is a common name on the doorbell. Even Thomas's parents don't know where their son is.

Mariam is now confident enough to go to the bakery alone. "Being able to move about freely is the greatest luxury for me," she says. She is now completing a business management training program.

She was only forced to confront her family one more time. On the advice of her attorney, she filed a complaint against her sister after the sister had threatened her on the phone. Because the court did not wish to jeopardize her safety, Mariam took part in the proceedings via videoconference. Her anxious face could be seen on three screens in the courtroom, in a scene reminiscent of a Mafia trial.

But she had merely been dispensing sisterly advice, the outraged defendant claimed, while her husband ridiculed the proceedings from one of the visitors' benches.

### **'I Feel Hate'**

When the court questioned Mariam's older sisters, they testified that they were married to cousins. "It's normal for us," they said. They painted a picture of a loving, "perfect" family, one in which every family member could do as he or she pleased.

"Why then should your sister go to such great lengths, if she had nothing to fear?" asked the judge. The family members had no response, and for the first time there was silence in the courtroom.

The court's ruling lit a beacon of hope for Mariam. Her sister was convicted of coercion and sentenced to six months in prison, suspended to two years on probation. "Should anything happen to my client now, the circumstances will be more obvious. It was an important step," Mariam's attorney said in a statement in the courtroom.

Sometimes tears come to Mariam's eyes when she thinks about her little sister. She regrets having left her alone. And when she thinks about her parents? Mariam reflects for a moment. "I feel hate," she says. "And longing."

*Translated from the German by Christopher Sultan*

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## 'The Holocaust Is German Family History'

# Book Urges Germans to Quiz Dying Nazi Generation

By [David Crossland](#)

German historian Moritz Pfeiffer asked his granddad what he did in World War II, and then fact-checked the testimony. His findings in a new book shed light on a dying generation that remains outwardly unrepentant, but is increasingly willing to break decades of silence on how, and why, it followed Hitler.

Germany has won praise for collectively confronting its Nazi past, but the subject has remained a taboo in millions of family homes -- with children and grandchildren declining to press their elders on what they did in the war.

At least 20 to 25 million Germans knew about the Holocaust while it was happening, according to conservative estimates, and some 10 million fought on the Eastern Front in a war of annihilation that targeted civilians from the start. That, says German historian Moritz Pfeiffer, makes the genocide and the crimes against humanity a part of family history.

Time is running out. The answer to how a cultured, civilized nation stooped so low lies in the minds of the dying Third Reich generation, many of whom are ready and willing to talk at the end of their lives, says Pfeiffer, 29, who has just completed an unprecedented research project based on his own family.

"The situation has changed radically compared with the decades immediately after the war," Pfeiffer, a historian at a museum on the SS at [Wewelsburg Castle](#), told SPIEGEL ONLINE. "The generation of eyewitnesses evidently wants to talk now, at least that's my impression. Towards the end of one's life the distance to the events is so great that people are ready to give testimony."

"Immediately after the war, conversations about it between parents and children appear to have been impossible because it was all too fresh," Pfeiffer continued. "Now the problem is that no one is listening to that generation anymore. As a source of information, one's relatives are largely being ignored. But one day it will be too late."

### New Approach to Questioning Relatives

Oral history has become increasingly popular, even though personal reminiscences are chronically unreliable as they are distorted by time. But Pfeiffer took a new approach by interviewing his two maternal grandparents about what they did in the war, and then systematically checking their statements using contemporary sources such as letters and army records.

No one has done this before.

He juxtaposed his findings with context from up-to-date historical research on the period and wrote a book that has shed new light on the generation that unquestioningly followed Hitler, failed to own up to its guilt in the immediate aftermath of the war and, more than six decades on, remains unable to express personal remorse for the civilian casualties of Hitler's war of aggression, let alone for the Holocaust.

His recently published book, "My Grandfather in the War 1939-1945," (published in German only) is based on the interviews he conducted in 2005 with his grandfather, named only as Hans Hermann K., who was a career officer in a Wehrmacht infantry regiment. His grandmother Edith was too ill to be interviewed at length but he analyzed many of her letters. Both died in 2006.

Both of them supported the Nazi regime and Pfeiffer admits that they were morally "contaminated," like millions of ordinary Germans of that generation. He describes his grandmother Edith as a "committed, almost fanatical Nazi."

### **'No One Can Say What They Would Have Done'**

But the project wasn't an attempt to pass judgment on his grandparents, says Pfeiffer. He only wanted to understand them.

"No one today can say what they would have done or thought at the time," he said. "I believe that people will learn a lot if they understand how their respected and loved parents or grandparents behaved in the face of a totalitarian dictatorship and murderous racial ideology," Pfeiffer said.

"Dealing with one's family history in the Nazi period in an open, factual and self-critical way is an important contribution to accepting democracy and avoiding a repeat of what happened between 1933 and 1945."

Hans Hermann K. was so good at goosestepping that he was briefly transferred to a parade unit in Berlin. Edith joined the Nazi Party and was so zealous that when she married Hans Hermann in 1943, she provided documentation tracing her Aryan roots all the way back to the early 18th century -- even SS members were "only" required to verify their racial purity back to January 1, 1800.

During the course of his research, Moritz Pfeiffer found large gaps, contradictions and evasive answers in Hans Hermann's testimony -- regarding his purported ignorance of mass executions of civilians, for example.

### **Grandfather Fought in France, Poland, Soviet Union**

Hans Hermann was a lieutenant in the famous 6th Army and fought in the invasions of Poland, France and the Soviet Union, where he lost an eye in September 1942 when a shell exploded near him.

His wound probably saved his life. Shortly after he was evacuated back to Germany for treatment, his unit was sent to Stalingrad and virtually wiped out. Only 6,000 men survived out of the more than 100,000 that were taken prisoner by the Red Army at Stalingrad.

Few would disagree that Germany as a nation has worked hard to atone for its past, unlike Austria and Japan which have cloaked themselves in denial. Germany has paid an estimated €70 billion in compensation for the suffering it caused, conducts solemn ceremonies to commemorate the victims and, above all, has owned up to what was done in its name.

Companies and government ministries have opened up their archives to historians to illuminate their role in the Third Reich, and [a late push in prosecutions](#) of war criminals is underway to make up for the failure to bring them to justice in the decades after the war.

But millions never confronted their own personal role as cogs in the Nazi machinery.

Hans Hermann was no different, even though he readily agreed to talk to his grandson.

He was born in 1921 to an arch-conservative, nationalist family with military traditions in the western city of Wuppertal. His father, a furniture store owner, regaled him with stories about his time as a lieutenant in World War I, and it was instilled in him at an early age that the war reparations of the Versailles Treaty were exaggerated.

The store boomed after Hitler took power because the new government provided cheap government loans for married couples to buy kitchen and bedroom furniture.

In the interview, Hans Hermann was frank about his attitude towards Jews in the mid-1930s, when he was in his early teens and a member of the Jungvolk youth organization, which was affiliated with the Hitler Youth.

Asked by Moritz whether he thought at the time that the racial laws banning Jews from public life and systematically expropriating their property were unfair, he said:

"No, we didn't regard that as injustice, we had to go with the times and the times were like that. The media didn't have the importance then that they do today."

### **'We Had to Keep Our Mouths Shut'**

But Hans Hermann didn't join the Nazi party, and said in 2005 that he opposed the Reichskristallnacht, the Nov. 9, 1938 pogrom organized by the Nazi regime in which thousands of Jewish stores and synagogues were attacked and burned.

"That wasn't right. We were angry about the violence and the fire in the synagogue, that wasn't our thing," he said. "That was the SA, that was the SS, we rejected that ... But we couldn't do anything, we had to keep our mouths shut."

Asked about the [invasion of Poland](#) and the executions of civilians, Hans Hermann was evasive, at first describing relations between the German army and Poles as "friendly" and saying he knew nothing about mass shootings of Polish civilians at the time.

When pressed by Moritz, however, he admitted he knew about killings being committed by the SS, but added that the Wehrmacht had nothing to do with it -- a typical attitude that reflected the long-held myth that regular German soldiers weren't involved in atrocities.

Pfeiffer said he found his grandfather's indifference to the suffering of the Polish population, 6 million of whom died in the war, "staggering" but, again, typical of the response of many Germans of his generation.

In 1941, Hans Hermann took part in Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union. He was in the Infantry Regiment 208 of the 79th Infantry Division, and he said he knew nothing about criminal orders such as the German army's infamous "Commissar Order" -- that all Soviet political commissars detected among the captured must be killed.

### **'Hardly Believable'**

Asked about the Commissar Order, Hans Hermann said: "I didn't hear anything about that, don't know it. We were behind the combat troops who were the ones taking prisoners."

Pfeiffer refuted the claim that his grandfather's unit took no prisoners. He found the war diary of the 79th Infantry Division which records that 5,088 Russian soldiers were captured between August 5 and August 31 alone. Between September 20 and 25, a further 24,000 were taken prisoner.

Even the ones who weren't shot dead on the spot had a slim chance of survival. More than 3 million of the 5.7 million Red Army soldiers captured by German forces in World War II died, a proportion of almost 60 percent.

Pfeiffer said his grandfather as a front line officer and company commander would have been subject to the order to weed out the political commissars from among captured Red Army soldiers and have them shot. The historian said he couldn't ascertain whether his grandfather ever had to take such a decision. But historical evidence exists that the 79th Infantry division carried out the order.

Also, historians have proven that the 6th Army, which Hans Hermann's division was part of, carried out war crimes and massacres, and assisted in the murder of 33,771 Jews in the ravine of [Babi Yar](#) in Ukraine at the end of September 1941.

Pfeiffer said it was "hardly believable" that his grandfather didn't know anything about the mass killings.

Hans Hermann also said: "The Bolsheviks were our enemies, that was clear and we had to be guided by that. But those who greeted us with salt and bread on their doorstep, they couldn't be enemies, we treated them well." He didn't say what happened to civilians who didn't greet the troops with salt and bread.

### **'Spellbound by the Words of the Führer'**

Pfeiffer's book also presents letters written by his grandmother Edith that showed her ardent support for Hitler. On Nov. 8, 1943, she wrote to her husband after hearing Hitler speak: "I am still totally spellbound by the words of the Führer that were stirring and inspiring as ever! I glow with enthusiasm ... One feels strong enough to tear out trees."

In his interview, Hans Hermann expressed criticism of the Allied bombings of German cities. "How could that be possible, against the civilian population!" He made no mention of German bombing attacks on Rotterdam and Coventry in 1940.

He was taken prisoner by American forces in Metz, France, in October 1944 and didn't see his wife again until March 1946.

Pfeiffer concluded that his grandfather wasn't lying outright in his interviews, but merely doing what millions of Germans had done after the war -- engaging in denial, playing down their role to lessen their responsibility.

It led to the convenient myth in the immediate aftermath of the war that the entire nation had been duped by a small clique of criminals who bore sole responsibility for the Holocaust -- and that ordinary Germans had themselves been victims.

Germany has long since jettisoned that fallacy. But Pfeiffer admits that his book didn't answer a key question about his loving, kind grandparents who were pillars of his family for decades.

"Why did the humanity of my grandparents not rebel against the mass murders and why didn't my grandfather, even in his interview in 2005, concede guilt or shame or express any sympathy for the victims?"

### **'Moral Insanity'**

When asked whether he felt that he shared any of the collective guilt for the Holocaust, Hans Hermann said: "No. That is no guilt collectively. No group is levelling this collective guilt, it's differentiated today, in historical research as well. The individual guilt of people and groups is being researched."

Pfeiffer writes that his grandparents were infected by the same "moral insanity" that afflicted many Germans during and after World War I: "A state of emotional coldness, a lack of self-criticism and absolute egotism combined with a strong deficit of moral judgment as well as the support, acceptance and justification of cruelty when the enemy was affected by it."

Those are damning words. Pfeiffer said his grandparents' generation probably had no choice but to suppress their guilt in order to keep on functioning in the hard post-war years when all their energy was focused on rebuilding their livelihoods. "It was a necessary human reaction," said Pfeiffer.

The *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* -- the confrontation with the past -- got a much-needed push with the 1968 student protests.

For many, the atonement didn't come fast enough. German author Ralph Giordano referred to the "Second Guilt" in a book he wrote in 1987 -- the reluctance to own up to the crimes, and the ability of [Nazi perpetrators to prosper in postwar West Germany](#).

Pfeiffer hopes his book will encourage other children and grandchildren of eyewitnesses to follow suit. "I think conversations like the ones I carried out will bring relatives together rather than drive a wedge between them," he said.

Pfeiffer's original intention had been just to write a family history for personal use. After he interviewed his grandfather, he edited the transcript and presented it to the family at Christmas in 2005.

### 'Non-Verbal Admissions of Guilt'

But he had noticed omissions in his grandfather's testimony and had asked him to submit to a second, more rigorous interview in summer 2006. Hans Hermann agreed. Unfortunately, Moritz never got the chance to conduct it. Edith died in June that year after a long illness. Overcome by grief, Hans Hermann died six weeks later.

Asked how he thinks his grandfather would have reacted to his book, Pfeiffer said: "I think he would have initially been shocked about the unsparing presentation of his life story and wouldn't exactly have been delighted at my critical comments and conclusions.

"But I think he would have spent a long time examining it and would acknowledge the factual analysis and the fact that I wasn't trying to discredit him or settle any scores."

Pfeiffer sees a big difference between what the dying generation is able to articulate and what it is actually feeling. He detected what he called "non-verbal admissions of guilt" in his grandfather's behavior.

After the war, Hans Hermann encouraged his daughter to learn French and hosted French pupils on exchange programs. He also supported the European integration policy of Konrad Adenauer and Charles de Gaulle, and avoided going to veterans' reunions.

In 2005, he was outraged at first by a research report Pfeiffer co-wrote at the University of Freiburg about the involvement of the Wehrmacht in war crimes. A few weeks later, however, he told his grandson: "I have thought a lot about it -- and there's some truth to it."

*Moritz Pfeiffer: "Mein Großvater im Krieg 1939-1945. Erinnerung und Fakten im Vergleich". Donat-Verlag, Bremen 2012, 216 Seiten. Available in [SPIEGEL SHOP](#).*

### URL:

- <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,826633,00.html>

## Schuldenkrise Europas Überlebenskampf

FAZ 09.04.2012 · Die Anstrengungen von Griechenland, Portugal, Spanien und Italien gegen die Schuldenberge sind nahezu aussichtslos. Denn dazu kommt ein weiteres Problem: Den Volkswirtschaften bricht die demographische Basis weg.

Von Gunnar Heinsohn



© dapd

Portugal bricht - wie vielen europäischen Volkswirtschaften - die demographische Basis weg

In Griechenland hat der Schuldenschnitt faktisch 70 Prozent der Schulden wegrasiert - aber es bleiben Zweifel, ob das reicht. Für Portugal hat die sogenannte Troika nun ein Zeugnis ausgestellt, wonach die Staatsschuldenquote im Jahr 2013 mit etwas über 115 Prozent des Bruttoinlandsprodukts (BIP) ihren Höhepunkt erreichen und danach sinken soll. Wer's glaubt. Portugal bricht - wie den meisten anderen europäischen Volkswirtschaften - die demographische Basis weg. Bei einer Arbeitslosigkeit von annähernd 15 Prozent haben allein 2011 über 150 000 der Besten ihre portugiesische Heimat verlassen. Die meisten fliegen nach Brasilien. Manche gehen auch nach England, einige in die Petroleumindustrie Angolas. Ihren Anteil an den Staatsschulden lassen sie zu Hause. Ihr Potential zur Bedienung von Krediten gewinnt die neue Heimat.

78 Milliarden Euro umfasst das Hilfsprogramm der EU und des IWF für die 10,5 Millionen Portugiesen. Doch das Geld - 8000 Euro vom Säugling bis zum Greis - vermag nichts gegen den Exodus der Talente. Bis 2020 kann Portugals Einwohnerzahl auf 9 Millionen Menschen sacken. Im realistischen Szenario hat die Bevölkerung dann ein Durchschnittsalter von 47 statt derzeit 40 Jahren. Das ist nahe am Europarekord von 48 Jahren, der auch dann an die Deutschen geht. Wenn schon die niedergehende Demographie die Wachstumsperspektive trübt - woher soll bis 2020 der Aufschwung der lusitanischen Industrie kommen? Durch Innovationen?

Nach den jüngsten verfügbaren Zahlen meldeten Portugiesen 2009 nur 24 (!) der insgesamt 52 000 europäischen Patente in diesem Jahr an. Genauso wenig gingen an die 10,5 Millionen Griechen, die sogar 23 000 Euro je Kopf an EU-Hilfskrediten erhalten. Immerhin stehen die Hellenen auf der Welt-IQ-Liste des Entwicklungspsychologen Heiner Rindermann mit Rang 39 acht Plätze vor Portugal.

Wie aber müsste die geistige Beweglichkeit für eine Aufholjagd aussehen, um wirklich an die wirtschaftliche Spitze aufzuschließen? Nehmen wir die Schweiz mit IQ-Rang 10 (Deutschland: 22). Sie fuhr 2009 bei 8 Millionen Einwohnern 2420 europäische Patente ein. Deutschland mit dem gut Zehnfachen der Schweizer Bevölkerung kam auf 11 384 Patente. Gibt es Hinweise, dass Griechenland und Portugal ihre Patentbilanz um den Faktor 100 oder auch nur 10 aufbessern könnten? Eher werden die Trauerwerte von 2009 noch unterboten, weil die Emigration der Könnner nicht aufhört. Die demographische Entwicklung spricht dagegen, dass die Schuldentragfähigkeit zunimmt. In den Jahren 2020 und danach, wenn es auf eigenen Füßen stehen soll, werden Portugals Steuereinnahmen nicht für die wachsenden Rentenlasten reichen.



# Die Talente ihre Heimatländer

Auch die 61 Millionen Italiener mit einem Durchschnittsalter von 44 Jahren (2020: 47) mit - wie Griechenland oder Portugal - nur 1,4 Kindern je Frau ächzen unter hohen Schulden, dazu 47 Millionen Spanier, die derzeit ein Durchschnittsalter von 41 Jahren erreichen (2020: 44) und kaum mehr Kinder haben. Immerhin hat Italien (IQ-Rang 25) eine innovativere Wirtschaft. Mit 1992 Patenten im Jahre 2009 erreichte es je Einwohner rund ein Zehntel des Werts der Schweiz, während Spanien (IQ-Rang 35) mit nur 348 Patenten aussichtslos abfällt.

Gleichwohl erklingt auch hier immer wieder die anrührende Melodie der Euro-Retter, dass man nur noch ein knappes Jahrzehnt benötige, bis „tiefgreifende“ Strukturreformen sich selbst tragende Aufschwünge für das Abtragen der Schulden (und im Falle Griechenlands und Portugals: der Hilfskredite) nach sich ziehen. Wie so etwas bei schrumpfenden und alternden Bevölkerungen, deren beste Talente auswandern, funktionieren soll, bleibt Geheimnis der EU-Nomenklatura.

Die leistungsstärkste Bevölkerungsgruppe im Alter von 25 bis 59 Jahre wird in Italien zwischen 2010 und 2030 von 30 auf 25 Millionen Menschen sinken. Obwohl Rom in der EU die geringste Unterdeckung der Pensionsversprechen ausweist, folgen für die spätere Versorgung dieser 25 Millionen nur noch 14 Millionen Menschen von derzeit unter 24 Jahren, während schon jetzt 21 Millionen über 60 Jahre zu versorgen sind.

Auch in Deutschland, dem größten Garantiegeber der Eurorettung, ist bald demographisch „Feuer unterm Dach“? Zwischen 2010 und 2030 schrumpft seine Aktivgruppe (25 bis 59 Jahre) von 40,5 auf 32,5 Millionen. Für deren Absicherung folgen gerade 18 Millionen unter 25 Jahre, während 29 Millionen über 60 Jahre ein würdiges Alter fordern.

Niemand versteht, wie das aufgehen soll. Man weiß lediglich, dass für den dauerhaften Rettungsmechanismus ESM keines der großen garantierenden AAA-Länder sein Top-Rating verlieren darf, weder Frankreich und noch weniger Deutschland mit seiner schrumpfvergreisenden Bevölkerung. Wenn einer beim Garantieren fremder Ramschpapiere einknickt, bricht die gesamte Konstruktion. Dann bleibt nur noch die Europäische Zentralbank mit ihren unendlich tiefen Taschen, um die Staatsschulden zu monetisieren.

Der Autor ist Ökonom und Demograph und lehrte Sozialwissenschaften an der Universität Bremen.

Quelle: F.A.Z.

## Ratingagentur Egan-Jones „Portugal fällt auf jeden Fall“

FAS 07.04.2012 · Die amerikanische Ratingagentur Egan-Jones steht im Schatten der drei großen Konkurrenten Moody's, Standard & Poor's und Fitch. Schon öfter gelang es ihr, die Wettbewerber zu ärgern. Im Interview spricht Agentur-Chef Sean Egan über die nächsten Pleiten, eine zweite Umschuldung für Athen und seinen Wettstreit mit Moody's & Co.



© Röth, Frank Sean Egan ist Chef der amerikanischen Ratingagentur Egan Jones. Sie lässt sich nicht von Wertpapieremittenten bezahlen, sondern von Investoren.

**Herr Egan, geben Sie es zu: Sie mögen Europa nicht.**

Wie kommen Sie denn darauf? Ich kann zwar meist nicht lange bleiben, aber besonders der Frühling in Europa gefällt mir sehr.

**Mit Europas Regierungen gehen Sie weniger zahm um. Ihre Ratingagentur hat sogar die Kreditwürdigkeit Deutschlands herabgestuft. Warum so streng?**

Sie glauben doch nicht, dass Deutschland davonkommen wird. Welcher Staat hat denn als einziger in Europa noch die Kraft, für die Verluste Südeuropas einzustehen? Es sind die deutschen Steuerzahler, die am Ende draufzahlen müssen, da bin ich mir sicher. Und bei einer solchen Belastung kann Deutschland unmöglich seine Bestnote behalten.

**Übertreiben Sie da nicht? An den Märkten herrscht doch Ruhe, seit die Europäische Zentralbank die Banken zu Niedrigzinsen mit Krediten versorgt.**

Zugestanden: Diese massive Kapitalspritze der Europäischen Zentralbank hat die Marktteilnehmer kurzfristig besänftigt, die Anleihezinsen in vielen Problemstaaten sinken. Aber was wir zurzeit erleben, ist eine äußerst trügerische Ruhe. Die EZB hat den Kollaps des Systems nur herausgezögert, verhindern kann sie ihn nicht. Vergessen Sie nicht: Kapitalspritzen lassen sich nicht ewig verabreichen, Schulden nicht einfach so wegzaubern - am Ende muss immer jemand die Verluste tragen.



© Röth, Frank

„Es sind die deutschen Steuerzahler, die am Ende draufzahlen müssen“

**Sie rechnen also mit weiteren Staatspleiten im Euroraum? Bislang haben die Regierungschefs dies doch immer ausgeschlossen.**

Schauen Sie sich den Verlauf der Euro-Krise an: Die Regierungschefs haben schon so vieles ausgeschlossen - und am Ende ist es immer genau dazu gekommen. So war es bei der Umschuldung Griechenlands, so wird es auch bei anderen angeschlagenen Eurostaaten sein. Das Drama steuert erst noch auf seinen Höhepunkt zu. Portugal trifft es auf jeden Fall, daran habe ich keinen Zweifel. Wenn die Wirtschaft eines Landes so stark schrumpft und gleichzeitig die Zinskosten für Anleihen mit zehnjähriger Laufzeit bei rund zehn Prozent liegen, ist eines klar: Das ist ein unhaltbarer Zustand.

**Auch Spanien musste in der vergangenen Woche wieder höhere Zinsen für seine Anleihen bieten.**

Dies zeigt, wie kurzfristig der Effekt der EZB-Maßnahmen ist. Am Grundproblem hat sich dadurch nämlich nichts geändert: In Spanien fehlt es an Wachstum, das Gleiche gilt für Italien. Wenn die Euro-Krise nur ein wenig wieder aufflammt, geraten beide Länder unausweichlich in dieselbe Lage wie Portugal. Und noch ein Wort zu Griechenland: Die aktuelle griechische Umschuldung war mit großer Sicherheit nicht die letzte.

**Meinen Sie das ernst? Die Gläubiger mussten doch gerade auf den Großteil ihres Geldes verzichten.**

Verzeihen Sie den Vergleich, aber bei der Lage in Griechenland muss ich immer an die Bibel denken. Gott offenbart sich dort auch erst nach und nach: Im Alten Testament weiß man noch recht wenig über ihn, erst im Neuen Testament wird das Bild klarer. Ein wenig erinnert das an Griechenland. Erst nach und nach beginnt die Finanzwelt, die dortige Situation wirklich zu durchschauen. Die unangenehme Wahrheit ist: Trotz der vielen Hilfspakete wird Griechenland weiter auf einem Schuldenberg sitzenbleiben, den es langfristig nicht bedienen kann. Auch wenn ich nicht sofort damit rechne: Da hilft nur ein weiterer Schuldenschnitt. Am Ende werden Investoren bis zu 95 Prozent Verlust hinnehmen müssen, fürchte ich.

**Was macht Sie so sicher, dass Sie recht haben?**

Es mag arrogant klingen: Aber wir liegen mit unseren Einschätzungen meistens richtig. Seit 2001 vergleichen wir uns systematisch mit den Marktführern Standard & Poor's und Moody's. Ergebnis: Wir sind schneller und besser. In 95 Prozent der Fälle sind die Großen uns hinterhergelaufen. Sie haben genau die Ratingaktionen nachgeahmt, die wir schon längst vorgenommen hatten.



© Röth, Frank

„Das Drama steuert erst noch auf seinen Höhepunkt zu“

**In Amerika schaffen Sie es mit so viel Selbstbewusstsein oft in die Börsenberichte auf CNBC. Müssen Sie so laut tönen, weil Sie am Markt sonst kein Gehör finden?**

Das haben wir nicht nötig. Natürlich hat sich bei unserer Gründung im Jahr 1995 niemand um unsere Meinung geschert. Das ist mittlerweile anders: Wir werden gehört, weil wir in all den Jahren bewiesen haben, dass wir besser sind.

**Sie sagen, Sie seien besser. Sie haben aber nur 15 Analysten. Zu wenig Personal, um den Großen Konkurrenz zu machen, oder?**

Ganz und gar nicht. Um etwas zu durchschauen, braucht man doch nicht unbedingt viele Leute. Denken Sie nur an Warren Buffett, einen der erfolgreichsten amerikanischen Investoren. Der hat kaum Personal - und trotzdem ein Gespür für die richtigen Aktien.

**Wenn Sie die Zahlungsfähigkeit eines Landes bewerten, werden Sie sich hoffentlich nicht nur auf Ihr Gespür verlassen.**

Unser Vorgehen ist immer das gleiche. Vereinfacht gesagt, schauen wir uns zuerst den Schuldenstand eines Landes im Vergleich zur Wirtschaftsleistung an. Darauf überlegen wir, welche Zinskosten sich ein Staat für neue Anleihen maximal leisten kann. Daran schließt sich eine dritte Frage an: Hat das Land noch Möglichkeiten, seine Steuereinnahmen deutlich zu steigern oder Leistungen zu kürzen? Dann fällen wir unser Urteil.

**Das dürfte sich kaum von der Herangehensweise Ihrer Konkurrenten unterscheiden.**

Mag sein. Der entscheidende Unterschied liegt in der Tat woanders. Die großen Agenturen lassen sich von den Emittenten der Anleihen bezahlen - also von Staaten und Unternehmen. Darum haben unsere Konkurrenten einen Anreiz, schlechte Ratingurteile zu verzögern. Wer will es sich schon mit seinen Kunden verscherzen? Auch wenn die Schuldenkrise dazu geführt hat, dass die Großen strenger urteilen müssen als früher: das ist ein Interessenkonflikt, der nicht auflösbar ist. Darum lassen wir uns von den Investoren bezahlen.

**Aber Investoren könnten doch genauso ein Interesse an guten Ratingnoten für die Anleihen in ihrem Portfolio haben.**

Das ist nicht auszuschließen. Aber wir wissen gar nicht, was unsere Kunden im Depot haben. Und selbst wenn wir es wüssten: Da gibt es sicherlich Kunden mit völlig entgegengesetzten Positionen und Wetten. Wie sollten wir uns da entscheiden?

**Bei so viel Kritik: Reden die Mitarbeiter anderer Agenturen überhaupt noch mit Ihnen?**

Wenig. Manchmal meldet sich jemand und fragt nach einem Job.

Er habe Spaß daran, die Großen zu ärgern, hat **Sean Egan** einmal gesagt. Das ist dem Chef der amerikanischen **Ratingagentur Egan-Jones** bereits einige Male gelungen. Während der amerikanischen Hypothekenkrise 2007 warnte er anders als die großen Ratingagenturen Moody's und Standard & Poor's frühzeitig vor den Gefahren von Hypothekenanleihen. Auch bei den Betrugsfällen um die Unternehmen Enron und Worldcom reagierte Egan schneller als seine Konkurrenten mit Herabstufungen. Der **frühere Investmentbanker** und Absolvent der Harvard Business School gründete sein Ratinghaus im Jahr 1995 gemeinsam mit einem Geschäftspartner. Derzeit bewertet die Agentur nach eigenen Angaben die Kreditwürdigkeit von **1250 Unternehmen und Ländern.** (dek.)

Das Gespräch führte **Dennis Kremer.**

Quelle: F.A.S.

## Arbeitslosigkeit in der EU: Große Verunsicherung

FAZ 09.04.2012 · Fast 25 Millionen Menschen sind ohne Arbeit, die Union wird zu einer Zwei-Klassen-Gesellschaft. Die Schuldenkrise hat den langfristigen, globalen Abschied Europas beschleunigt.

Von [Klaus-Dieter Frankenberger](#)



© dpa Trauriger Rekord: Die Euro-Länder vermelden eine Arbeitslosenquote von 10,8 Prozent (im Bild das Arbeitsamt in Madrid)

Es war nicht schön, was das europäische Statistikamt Anfang der Woche zu verkünden hatte: Im Februar waren mehr als 17 Millionen Personen in den 17 Euro-Ländern arbeitslos; das entspricht einer Arbeitslosenquote von 10,8 Prozent, ein trauriger Rekord. In den hochverschuldeten Eurostaaten war die Lage noch viel schlimmer. Sie wird dort mutmaßlich noch schlechter werden. In der EU insgesamt lag die Arbeitslosenquote bei 10,2 Prozent, in den 27 Länder waren 24,6 Millionen erwerbslos.

Die Nachricht von der Entwicklung auf den europäischen Arbeitsmärkten kann man auch lesen als spätes Echo des Zweifels auf eine Versicherung der Bundeskanzlerin vom vergangenen Dezember. Als der europäische Fiskalpakt unter Dach und Fach war, ließ sich Frau Merkel mit dem Satz vernehmen, Europa werde aus der Krise stärker herauskommen, als es hineingegangen sei. Auf Deutschland bezogen, hatte die Kanzlerin früher Ähnliches gesagt, und die Entwicklung scheint ihr recht zu geben: Unsere Nachbarn staunen über Deutschlands zweites Wirtschaftswunder. Was jedoch die EU und die Währungsunion angeht, überwiegen im Moment Zweifel und Skepsis: Die Krise hat strategische Konsequenzen, und die sind unter dem Strich fast alle negativ.

### **„Pooling and sharing“ und „Smart defense“**

Zu diesem Schluss, der weit über die banale Feststellung hinausgeht, dass die EU von der Staatsschuldenkrise arg gebeutelt wird, kommt auch das „Center for Security Studies“ der Eidgenössischen Technischen Hochschule Zürich in seiner Studie „Strategic Trends 2012“. Danach haben sich als Folge der Malaise Europas die Machtverhältnisse in der EU nachhaltig geändert, und zwar so, dass deren Rolle als Stabilitätsanker in Europa und darüber hinaus geschwächt wird. Daneben habe die Schuldenkrise den langfristigen globalen Abstieg Europas beschleunigt.

Die Gemeinsame Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik wird als Beispiel für Impotenz, Aufmerksamkeitsverlust, schwindender Ressourcen und abnehmenden Vertrauens unter den EU-Partnern gewertet. Die vom Vertrag von Lissabon eingeführten diesbezüglichen Neuerungen werden de facto rückgängig gemacht, auch weil die Mitgliedstaaten Außenpolitik weiter und wieder in eigener Regie betreiben wollen.

Auch auf einem dritten Feld hinterlasse die Schuldenkrise tiefe Spuren, dem der Verteidigung. Nahmen die europäischen Verteidigungsausgaben schon bisher ab, so wird sich dieser Trend noch verstärken. Aber ausgerechnet hier sehen die Autoren nicht ganz so schwarz, weil der Druck der Haushaltsdefizite die Regierenden auf neue Wege zwingt, auf denen sie die Demilitarisierung Europas stoppen könnten. Die Stichworte lauten „Pooling and sharing“ sowie „Smart defense“.

Es ist offensichtlich, dass die Finanz- und Staatsschuldenkrise die Verlagerung der Macht hin zu den Mitgliedstaaten verstärkt hat. So ist etwa die Stellung Deutschlands im Urteil der Schweizer Autoren heute so stark, wie das noch nie in der Geschichte der Einigung der Fall war. Spiegelbild ist die relative Schwäche Frankreichs und Großbritanniens. Wenn gesagt wird, die „deutsche Frage“ sei wieder aktuell, so trifft das für die „britische Frage“ allemal zu: In Britannien ist die Euroskepsis äußerst populär, die britische Regierung marginalisiert sich selbst, einen Austritt des Landes halten Fachleute nicht mehr für ein Hirngespinnst.


## **Die Legitimitätsfrage stellt sich neu**

Nimmt man die wieder größer werdende Kluft zwischen Nord und Süd, zwischen Gebern und Nehmern, kleinen und großen Mitgliedern hinzu, dann ist das Ergebnis reichlich viel Unsicherheit. Und das ist noch nicht das Ende: Politiker aus EU-Ländern, die nicht der Währungsunion angehören, argwöhnen, dass die Union zu einer Zwei-Klassen-Gesellschaft werden könnte und die Kohärenz auf der Strecke bliebe. Diese Gefahr besteht wirklich, sie ist genauso real wie die abnehmende Unterstützung der Wähler. Auch die Legitimitätsfrage stellt sich deshalb neu.

Es ist ein Gemeinplatz, aber trotzdem richtig: Die Europäer müssen die große Verunsicherung so schnell wie möglich überwinden. Sie müssen also die Verschuldungskrise in den Griff bekommen - was nicht von heute auf morgen gelingen kann. Lieber Abstand nehmen sollte man von der Idee, eine neue Verfassungsrunde einzuläuten. Der letzte Versuch war keine Werbung in eigener Sache. Der Vertrag von Lissabon, der herauskam, wird heute selbst von Leuten, die ihn zunächst überschwänglich lobten, als Enttäuschung gewertet. Es kommt auf die Wirtschaft an.

Quelle: F.A.Z.

## Ces islamistes qui recrutent derrière les barreaux

Par  Dominique Rizet Publié le 05/04/2012 à 16:28 [Réactions](#) (26)



Longtemps professé par des imams auto-proclamés, l'islam dispensé dans les prisons françaises est aujourd'hui très encadré. Y prêchent 151 aumôniers agréés par les autorités. Crédits photo : GEORGES MERILLON/Le Figaro Magazine

**La percée de l'islam radical dans les prisons françaises est une réalité. Pour tenter de la contenir, l'administration pénitentiaire et les services de renseignement de la police se mobilisent. Mais ils n'ont pas encore trouvé la solution...**

C'est un document de travail de 89 pages, commun à l'administration pénitentiaire et aux services de renseignement de la police (DCRI, direction centrale du renseignement intérieur, RG Paris et SDAT, sous-direction antiterroriste). Un «manuel», rédigé en 2008 par un groupe de travail regroupant les services de renseignement et de sécurité de 13 pays, intitulé L'islam radical et les phénomènes de prosélytisme islamistes dans les établissements français. Manuel de radicalisation dans les prisons, classé confidentiel. Objectif de ce guide: donner des indices aux surveillants de l'administration pénitentiaire (AP) pour dépister les signes de radicalisation des détenus de confession musulmane.

Après la tuerie de Toulouse - [Mohamed Merah](#) aurait glissé vers l'intégrisme alors qu'il était en prison -, le contenu de ce document était au cœur de la réunion organisée jeudi 29 mars, à la chancellerie, à la demande du président de la République, qui demandait au garde des Sceaux de mener en urgence une «réflexion approfondie» sur la propagation en prison des idéologies pouvant conduire au terrorisme. Autour de Michel Mercier, le directeur du renseignement, Ange Mancini, le patron de la DCRI, Bernard Squarcini, le procureur de Paris, le procureur général, le directeur national et les directeurs régionaux de l'administration pénitentiaire. Sinon des chiffres déjà connus, rien n'a filtré sur les méthodes de travail et de collecte d'«information» dans les 194 établissements (maisons centrales, centres de détention et maisons d'arrêt) que gère l'AP sur tout le territoire. Et pour cause: les autorités souhaitent garder la plus grande discrétion autour de leurs modes d'investigation et de surveillance de l'islam radical dans les prisons. Ces méthodes, nous vous les dévoilons ici.

Il y aurait, dans les établissements pénitentiaires en France, près de 20.000 musulmans pratiquants (c'est-à-dire respectant le ramadan) sur 66.000 détenus. C'est un chiffre de base. L'islam des prisons, dispensé jusqu'à il y a une dizaine d'années par des imams auto-proclamés, est aujourd'hui encadré par 151 aumôniers musulmans agréés à la fois par l'AP, l'aumônier général musulman et les services de renseignement. C'est un islam de tolérance et de respect.

### Un tiers des détenus sont musulmans

Vingt mille, c'est presque un tiers du nombre total des détenus en France. Un nombre qui inquiète en raison du comportement de quelques-uns. En effet, à l'intérieur des prisons, [le personnel de la pénitentiaire](#) a de plus en plus de problèmes à gérer les susceptibilités et les exigences - le refus, par

exemple, de certains musulmans d'accepter aujourd'hui la présence de femmes, qu'elles soient surveillantes ou affectées à l'administration des établissements pénitentiaires.

Il faut avoir poussé la porte d'une prison pour mieux comprendre. Pas seulement celle du parloir. Il faut avoir vu les «quartiers arrivants», parcouru les couloirs de la détention, marché dans les cours de promenade et conversé avec les détenus dans leur lieu de vie... Une fois la porte refermée, le point de passage obligatoire dès l'arrivée en détention est le service pénitentiaire d'insertion et de probation (Spip) où le détenu est reçu par son conseiller d'insertion et de probation (CIP). C'est son «référént», la personne sans doute la plus «précieuse» pour lui, qui l'accompagnera, d'un point de vue humain et administratif, pendant toute sa détention et dans la plupart de ses demandes quotidiennes. Les premiers incidents commencent ici. «C'est une situation que nous ne connaissions pas, avoue une CIP en poste dans une maison centrale: des détenus musulmans refusent maintenant de nous serrer la main ou demandent à ce que la porte de notre bureau reste ouverte... Certains refusent même de venir nous voir et exigent que leur CIP soit un homme. Nous ne pouvons pas accepter de céder à ce genre d'exigence.»

Dans les coursives de la prison de Roanne, un surveillant raconte la même histoire: «De plus en plus de prisonniers qui se découvrent une passion pour la religion enfilent la «robe» et ne disent plus bonjour aux femmes. Nous devons apprendre de nouvelles règles. Quand on va chercher certains détenus pour les accompagner à une activité ou une convocation et qu'ils prient dans leur cellule, on attend devant la porte. Les presser, c'est risquer l'incident majeur.»

Dans les couloirs de la détention, les surveillants redoutent de plus en plus les fouilles des cellules. «Certains nous interdisent de toucher et de déplacer leurs objets de culte, explique un gardien de la centrale de Poissy. Le tapis de prière fait partie de ces reliques... On leur demande de le déplacer eux-mêmes.» La période du ramadan est aussi difficile à gérer. «Nous leur servons un plateau froid en cellule, à midi, qu'ils peuvent conserver jusqu'à la tombée de la nuit. Certains le mangent dès que nous avons le dos tourné. Ils s'inscrivent sur la liste des pratiquants pour être bien vus des autres, ceux qui «contrôlent». La religion s'impose par la pression morale, par la violence, par la corruption aussi...»

Les débordements sont quotidiens. «Elle est devenue un moyen de pression, poursuit une surveillante affectée en centre de détention (CD). Les prières sont autorisées dans une salle prévue à cet effet et dans les cellules. Certains font des tentatives régulières et descendent dans la cour avec leur tapis de prière. Il faut parlementer encore et encore, peser chacun de ses mots, ne montrer aucun signe d'énervement ou de lassitude, car les provocateurs guettent la moindre parole maladroite.»

Tous les films sur la prison racontent les mêmes histoires vraies: les plus forts s'imposent aux plus faibles. De la même façon, l'islam radical essaie de s'imposer à l'islam modéré. Insidieusement. Et, si la suspicion sur les musulmans des prisons s'installe dans les esprits, les radicaux auront gagné encore un peu de terrain.

## **Le grand banditisme a cédé devant «les califes»**

Car la prison commence par la peur des autres et l'obligation pour les plus faibles de trouver refuge dans un groupe. Patrick Guillemin, ancien braqueur, vingt-trois ans de prison essentiellement en centrale, dont dix années passées à l'isolement pour une évasion de la prison des Baumettes en hélicoptère en 1999, parle en connaissance de cause: «À la centrale de Saint-Maur, dans l'Indre, en 2007, une bagarre avait éclaté entre un Corse et un «frère» dans l'atelier de conditionnement des Post-it du bâtiment A. L'affaire s'est envenimée. Je suis allé parlementer avec Djamel, le «chef» des «frères». Ces gars-là avaient tant de pouvoir et ils étaient si puissants que le directeur de la prison a dû céder, c'est-à-dire placer Ange - le Corse - à l'isolement, avant de le faire transférer. Les autres l'auraient tué... Il y a eu un moment, au début des années 2000, où le pouvoir a changé de main dans les prisons. Le grand banditisme auquel j'appartenais a cédé devant les califes, plus forts, plus nombreux... À l'époque, les musulmans priaient dans les cours de promenade. Quand la directive de l'AP est tombée, vers 2004, imposant la prière dans



les cellules ou dans une salle affectée à cela, les musulmans ont bloqué le parloir avec les familles à l'intérieur.»

En réalité, le grand banditisme a cédé d'abord et collaboré parfois. Ces deux univers si différents au départ ont fini par s'unir. Lionel Dumont, membre du gang de Roubaix, en est le parfait exemple. Délinquant converti, il a basculé dans l'islam radical avant de devenir braqueur pour financer le terrorisme. Aujourd'hui détenu à la nouvelle maison d'arrêt de Lille-Sequedin (Nord) ouverte en 2005, il fait partie des meilleurs recruteurs de la cause intégriste. Il est aussi l'un des islamistes emprisonnés les plus observés par les services de renseignement.

La surveillance des prisons repose sur la collaboration. «Travailler dans un espace fermé, confier un policier du renseignement, est extrêmement compliqué. On s'appuie sur les capacités que nous offre l'administration pénitentiaire...»



Selon les statistiques officielles, il y a près de 20.000 musulmans pratiquants dans les établissements pénitentiaires en France, soit environ un tiers du nombre total (66.000) des détenus dans l'Hexagone. Crédits photo : MEHDI FEDOUACH/AFP

Les «capacités» de l'AP, c'est l'EMS-3, le bureau du renseignement de l'EMS, l'état-major sécurité chargé du suivi «stratégique» de ces détenus qui ont basculé: 200 islamistes en tout, 75 incarcérés pour des affaires liées au terrorisme, dont 30 condamnés définitifs et 125 détenus pour prosélytisme radical. «La règle, pour eux, c'est l'éclatement, explique un directeur interrégional de l'AP. Il faut les séparer... Et, dès que l'un d'entre eux commence à appeler à la prière, on fait chauffer le camion et on le balluchonne (transfère, NDLR)».

Au parquet antiterroriste de Paris, le juge [Marc Trévidic](#) reconnaît lui aussi la complexité du problème: «Les enfermer tous ensemble et ils sortiront mieux organisés et plus dangereux en créant des liens. Les disperser dans différents établissements et ils endoctrineront des jeunes partout où ils passeront. Les transférer le plus souvent possible d'une prison à une autre, mais c'est complexe pour l'administration pénitentiaire. Les placer à l'isolement total, ce n'est pas digne d'une démocratie...»

Quand il évoque «l'endoctrinement», le magistrat parle en connaissance de cause. Alors qu'il était au parquet antiterroriste en 2001, une assistante de justice venue dans son service pour préparer une thèse sur les attentats de 1995 s'était prise de passion pour les dossiers que traitaient ses collègues et lui. La jeune femme, originaire du Sud-Ouest, a fini par demander des permis de visite pour rencontrer des détenus arabes emprisonnés, s'est convertie à l'islam, a épousé un radical salafiste et vit aujourd'hui en Égypte. L'affaire avait secoué le parquet et la section antiterroriste de la brigade criminelle de Paris, où la jeune

femme avait fréquenté et questionné de très nombreuses personnes pour rédiger sa thèse, interlocuteurs dont elle détenait les numéros de téléphone, les adresses ainsi qu'une quantité d'informations personnelles.

Parmi les prisonniers arabes qu'avait rencontrés la jeune femme, Djamel Beghal, que l'on soupçonne aujourd'hui d'avoir été l'élément catalyseur de sa conversion. Toujours interné, il est l'un des hommes les plus surveillés par l'EMS-3. L'AP a développé un «cahier de liaison électronique», le CEL, qui résume toute la vie du détenu, où l'on note tous les phénomènes de radicalisation. Un logiciel avec différents items permet aux surveillants de relever les renseignements d'ordre comportemental et surtout les changements d'attitude du détenu.

«Le grand mot de la pénitencière, poursuit notre interlocuteur de l'AP, c'est: avec qui il tourne? (dans la cour de promenade, NDLR) Est-ce qu'il va commencer à fréquenter un groupe identifié? Le basculement s'observe par des signes parfois évidents. Il se laisse pousser la barbe, se met à fréquenter la salle de prière, ne parle plus aux surveillants ou aux détenus autres que les «croyants», ne participe plus aux activités, ne regarde plus la télévision, n'écoute plus la radio et interdit aux autres de le faire, change son alimentation, se douche habillé ou impose aux autres d'en faire autant...» Toutes les informations concernant ces prisonniers sensibles sont transmises par l'EMS-3 à la DCRI, mais le renseignement va beaucoup plus loin. On s'intéresse aussi à ceux qui souhaitent rendre visite à des islamistes et qui font l'objet d'une enquête personnelle par l'AP. Le dossier et les photos du demandeur sont transmis à la DCRI. Les courriers des détenus ainsi «signalés» sont lus, leurs conversations téléphoniques passées depuis les cabines autorisées de la prison écoutées en temps réel ou enregistrées et réécoutées par des interprètes. Un travail titanesque.

## **Des astuces pour déjouer les surveillances**

À partir de là, la moindre information suspecte est transmise par l'AP à la police. La détention de téléphones portables ou de cartes SIM est une réalité quotidienne dans les prisons. Beaucoup d'appels sont passés la nuit, quand les prisonniers peuvent parler tranquillement où quand ils veulent vérifier que leurs épouses sont bien à la maison avec les enfants... La rumeur rapporte que les bornes de relais téléphonique quadrillant le secteur de certaines prisons sensibles situées en dehors des villes sont régulièrement espionnées et les numéros appelés depuis la centrale, identifiés par certains services de police... L'un de nos interlocuteurs policiers dément formellement en se réfugiant derrière la loi: aucune écoute sans cadre légal. Même mystère du côté de l'AP quand on demande si les parloirs des terroristes sont sonorisés.

Une dizaine d'islamistes en fin de peine seront libérés en 2012 et 2013. Ils seront «pris en charge» bien avant de quitter leur prison. La DCRI aura communication de leur adresse et lieu de travail. Leurs téléphones seront écoutés et leurs déplacements, contrôlés. Peu importe, les islamistes savent tout cela depuis longtemps déjà et imaginent constamment des astuces pour déjouer les surveillances.

Et, parmi ces parades, il y a la démocratie qui joue parfois contre elle-même: la loi pénitentiaire de 2009 interdit désormais les fouilles à nu de tous les prisonniers au retour des parloirs sauf à être «motivées par des indices sérieux». Pour ne pas avoir respecté cette nouvelle règle, les centres de détention de Salon-de-Provence, d'Oermingen, la prison des femmes de Rennes et celle de Poitiers-Vivonne ont été condamnés ces derniers mois par les tribunaux administratifs...

*\* Membre de la Commission pour l'application des règles pénitentiaires européennes de 2008 à 2010.*

## Tariq Ramadan appelle les musulmans à la «résistance»

Par [Jean-Marie Guénois](#) Publié le 08/04/2012 à 13:43 [Réactions](#) (6)



Tariq Ramadan samedi soir au Bourget pour le 29e congrès de l'UOIF. Crédits photo : JACQUES DEMARTHON/AFP

**Devant 40.000 fidèles réunis par l'UOIF au Bourget, l'intellectuel n'a pas ménagé ses critiques contre le gouvernement et a appelé les musulmans «à ne pas répondre aux attaques» mais à cultiver leur identité «française et musulmane».**

Il demande à ne pas être applaudi. Orateur brillant, [Tariq Ramadan](#), a tenu en haleine et sans note, samedi soir au Bourget, plusieurs dizaines de milliers de musulmans venus assister [au 29<sup>e</sup> congrès de l'Union des Organisation islamiques de France \(UOIF\)](#). Il en était l'invité vedette depuis que le gouvernement avait interdit la venue de six prédicateurs pour leurs propos explicitement antisémites. Il en était aussi l'invité controversé car le ministre de l'Intérieur, [Claude Guéant](#), a publiquement regretté, vendredi, qu'il soit maintenu à l'affiche, lui reprochant d'avoir défendu un «moratoire sur la lapidation des femmes».

Les encourageant à ne pas céder à la «réaction», Tariq Ramadan, a plutôt appelé les musulmans qui l'écoutaient - hommes d'un côté, femmes, toutes voilées, de l'autre - et des milliers de fidèles debout au fond, à une forme subtile de «résistance». «Je vous remercie d'avoir tenu bon, a-t-il lancé, malgré les pressions et les accusations». Car «c'est aussi l'honneur de la France d'accueillir cette rencontre». Décochant cette première critique: «On ne peut pas se prévaloir de Voltaire pendant quatre ans et l'oublier à deux semaines de l'élection» invitant à «ne pas confondre la France avec ceux qui la représentent».

L'intellectuel suisse, petit fils de Hassan al Banna, fondateur en 1928 des Frères musulmans en Egypte, a alors accusé le gouvernement de faire de la «surenchère» et de la «diversion» vis-à-vis de la «vraie crise économique», en misant, selon un «stratagème», sur les questions «de sécurité» qui sont pourtant «trop sérieuses pour être mises en scène». Posant en particulier la question du bilan pour les banlieues: «Qu'est ce qui a été fait depuis les émeutes de la banlieue en 2005 pour répondre au mal être, pas de travail, pas d'habitat?». Ou critiquant, sur le plan européen cette fois, le traitement «comme des animaux» des «charters de clandestins».

Citant l'exemple du «Prophète» qui a plusieurs fois connu l'adversité, il a recommandé aux 40 000 musulmans présents, de se placer «toujours avec élégance» dans une sorte «d'exil» intérieur: «Eloigne-toi d'eux, dans un bel exil». Et de lier, par conséquent «la foi et la résistance», la foi qui a «une vue longue». Une résistance calquée sur la stratégie du fondateur de l'islam: «Pourquoi le Prophète a-t-il été si efficace à la Mecque?» a demandé Tariq Ramadan à l'auditoire. Réponse: «Parce qu'il connaissait bien la société» de cette ville. Et «qu'en France, vous avez à connaître votre société».

Appelant donc à la connaissance de l'islam pour en connaître «la lumière», à son étude approfondie, il a demandé aux musulmans présents de prendre «conscience de leur responsabilité»: «En France, il faut comprendre cela. Nous portons un dépôt, un message»: «l'islam est un et accepte toute les cultures». Mais «il va falloir résister» a-t-il prévenu. D'abord contre soi-même, son «égo», fustigeant alors «l'arrogance» mais recommandant la «dignité»: «Je reste moi-même». Mais aussi résistance contre l'adversité car «ils

vont t'attaquer». Pour en déjouer les pièges: «Si vous répondez aux attaques, vous devenez l'objet de leur histoire». Résistance, enfin, pour un projet plus large: «Soyez à la fois ambitieux pour changer le monde et humble».

### **Savoir «acquérir les instruments des Occidentaux»**

Développant toujours la comparaison avec la stratégie du Prophète, il a alors déconseillé la voie de la négociation avec les gouvernements. «Tu veux protéger ta communauté en parlant avec le pouvoir et avec les riches». Une fausse piste selon lui: «Soyez toujours du côté des opprimés, c'est le seul pouvoir qui compte». Il a donc invité à «ne pas perdre de temps» et à ne pas compter «avec ceux qui ont un pouvoir de cinq ans», qui manient «le mensonge» et «l'hypocrisie» mais à devenir des «citoyens libres et indépendants». Car, «c'est fini le temps où l'on vous parle comme à des enfants et où on vous regarde comme si vous étiez en voie de maturation».

Tariq Ramadan a alors appelé les musulmans à apporter «leur contribution pour tous les droits». «Il faut un discours musulman sur «les libertés», sur l'égalité homme femme - «il faut plus de femmes à l'UOIF» - sur le respect des jeunes». Mais aussi développer «l'esprit critique» car il faut «poser des questions» et savoir «acquérir les instruments des Occidentaux». Evoquant alors le moment «historique», de la «présence des musulmans en Occident», il a lancé un appel à «l'unité» de la «diversité musulmane» pour ne surtout pas importer le «conflit chiite-sunnite» en Europe.

Affirmant, en conclusion, un «non, sans condition à l'antisémitisme», il a critiqué une nouvelle fois «l'oppression» du peuple palestinien, «ce qui n'a rien à voir avec l'antisémitisme», a-t-il pris soin de préciser. Avant sa prière finale, il s'est moqué des «services de renseignements généraux» présents dans la salle, déclenchant cette fois, des applaudissements: «Rapportez bien au gouvernement ce que l'on a dit, vraiment, pas ce que l'on aurait pu dire».

### Das Glück in der Krippe

FAS 07.04.2012 · Sollen Eltern, die ihr Kind nicht in eine Krippe geben, ein Betreuungsgeld vom Staat erhalten? Der Zeitgeist ist strikt dagegen und sucht das Heil in der Krippe. Großzügige Unterstützung vom Staat beansprucht jeder für sich.

Von [Rainer Hank](#)

Der Streit um das Betreuungsgeld wird immer erbitterter geführt. Wer noch dafür ist, dass Eltern, die ihr Kind nicht in eine Krippe geben, künftig monatlich 150 Euro erhalten, muss sich an diesen Ostertagen warm anziehen. Denn der Zeitgeist (ein ungewöhnliches Kartell aus Arbeitgeberfunktionären, FDP-Politikern und gendermäßig korrekten Fortschrittsfreundinnen) hält die Subvention für die Familien für rausgeschmissenes Geld, im besten Fall (Mittelschicht) unnötig, im schlechtesten Fall (Prekariat) schädlich, weil zum Kauf von Zigaretten und Alkohol zweckentfremdet. Der Zeitgeist sucht das Heil lieber in der Krippe und will alles Geld auf den Ausbau der aushäusigen Kinderbetreuung konzentrieren. Denn dann nur seien die Mütter zur Arbeit bereit und von Heim und Herd befreit.

Letzteres ist, mit Verlaub, das blödeste Argument gegen das Betreuungsgeld: Wenn Arbeitskräfte knapp werden (was aus demographischen Gründen sicher bald der Fall sein könnte), müssen Arbeitgeber ihnen eben mehr Gehalt bezahlen. Das jedenfalls ist der bessere Arbeitsanreiz als der Entzug des Betreuungsgeldes. Es wäre jedenfalls schon viel gewonnen, wenn in der Debatte die beschäftigungspolitischen von den familienpolitischen Argumenten getrennt würden.

### Die mangelnde Zahlungsbereitschaft der Eltern

Familienpolitisch aber ist nicht einzusehen, dass (wenn man schon subventioniert) die aushäusige Betreuung der Kleinkinder großzügiger vom Staat unterstützt wird als die heimische Erziehung. Die fehlenden Krippen sind schließlich kein Indiz von Marktversagen, sondern nur Ausweis mangelnder Zahlungsbereitschaft der Eltern. Wären die Eltern bereit, echte Marktpreise zu bezahlen, gäbe es auch bald ein entsprechendes Angebot privater Krippen. Wenn aber, wie bei uns der Fall, erwartet wird, dass der Staat sich an den Kita-Kosten beteiligt, dann dürfen jene Eltern nicht diskriminiert werden, die auf die Krippe verzichten.

Es sei denn, die Stigmatisierung des Betreuungsgeldes geschähe aus Lenkungsgründen. Das aber wäre nur statthaft, wenn sich einigermaßen zweifelsfrei zeigen ließe, dass Kinder glücklicher und lebensstüchtiger werden, wenn sie Zeiten ihrer frühen Kindheit in der Krippe verbracht haben. Bekanntlich lässt sich hier (unterstützt von Bergen wissenschaftlichen Papiers) so oder so argumentieren: Soziales Lernen in der Gruppe ist hilfreich, ein guter Kindergarten kompensiert ein verlottertes Elternhaus. Doch zugleich ist auch gewiss, dass die frühe Trennung von den Eltern ihre eigenen Traumata auslösen kann. Dass Krippenkinder mehr streiten, demolieren und bindungsunfähig werden können, darauf haben zuletzt, gut belegt, deutsche [Kinderärzte hingewiesen](#). Wenn Nutzen und Nachteile frühkindlicher Erziehung aber derart uneindeutig sind, sollte der Staat sich raushalten und die Eltern selbst, frei von ökonomischen Anreizen, entscheiden lassen. Wenn der Staat fördern will, kann er die Eltern direkt subventionieren (bei Angst vor Missbrauch in Form von Gutscheinen).

**Das Betreuungsgeld ist die 161. Subvention für Familien. Fair ist das alles nicht.**

Rund 160 familienpolitische Maßnahmen lässt der deutsche Staat sich jährlich rund 200 Milliarden Euro kosten. Das Betreuungsgeld ist sozusagen die 161. Subvention in einem Förderzoo, der zu weiten Teilen von der Mittelschicht für die Mittelschicht veranstaltet und finanziert wird. Das System ist weder effizient noch transparent, noch fair: Die Bürger haben sich gleichwohl an das „große Pumpwerk der Einkommen“ (Wilhelm Röpke) gewöhnt, das ihnen das Geld in die rechte Tasche nur pumpen kann, nachdem zuvor um einiges mehr aus der linken Tasche gezogen wurde. Ein Staat, der Gerechtigkeit herstellen will und dafür 161 Maßnahmen braucht, läuft zwangsläufig in die Ungerechtigkeitsfalle und befeuert den Verteilungskampf, anstatt ihn zu befrieden. Ein einfaches Steuersystem (wenn gewollt mit hoher Privilegierung von Eltern) wäre gerechter. Es wahrte zugleich den Respekt vor der Entscheidungsfreiheit der Bürger.

Quelle: F.A.S.

## Sechs Rezepte für den Euro-Ausstieg

F.A.S. 07.04.2012 · Ein britischer Lord hat einen Preis für den besten Vorschlag zum Euro-Ausstieg gestiftet. Hier sind die sechs besten Vorschläge. Welchen mögen Sie?

[Artikel Bilder \(7\)](#) [Lesermeinungen \(2\)](#)



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Der Ausstieg aus dem Euro ist schwierig, aber nicht unmöglich. Das zeigen die Vorschläge, die in den vergangenen Wochen bei der Jury des „Wolfson Prize“ eingegangen sind. Den Preis hat der britische Manager und Oberhaus-Abgeordnete Lord Wolfson gestiftet: 250.000 Pfund für den besten Vorschlag zum Ausstieg aus dem Euro. Es ist der höchstdotierte Wissenschaftspreis der Welt, nach dem Nobelpreis. Viele Forscher hatten prophezeit, die Aufgabe werde unlösbar sein. Doch die fünf nominierten Vorschläge, die vergangene Woche veröffentlicht wurden, stammen nicht von Wissenschaftlern, sondern von Praktikern. Ein sechster kommt von einem elfjährigen Jungen aus den Niederlanden. Die Jury hat ihn mit einem Sonderpreis ausgezeichnet.

*Am Ende dieses Artikels können Sie abstimmen, welchen Vorschlag Sie am überzeugendsten finden.*

### A) Auf Bares verzichten



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**Der Autor:** Roger Bootle ist Chef der britischen volkswirtschaftlichen Beratungsfirma Capital Economics.

**Der Vorschlag:** Die Peripheriestaaten bekommen einzelne Währungen. In einem Nordeuro bleiben Deutschland, Österreich, die Niederlande, Finnland, Belgien und Frankreich. Peripheriestaaten haben erst mal kein Bargeld – es wird ersetzt durch Kartenzahlungen. Zudem können Euro als Fremdwährung benutzt werden, bis Bargeld gedruckt ist.

**Die Vorteile:** Stabiles Währungssystem nach der Umstellung, Grenzkontrollen sind nicht nötig.

**Die Nachteile:** In der Zeit nach der Umstellung gibt es zu viele Euros. Wer in Griechenland Bargeld hortet, macht enormen Gewinn – aber Firmen aus den Peripheriestaaten gehen in Massen pleite, weil sie ihre Eurokredite nicht zurückzahlen können.

## B) „Newney“ einführen



© Irl, Maria

**Die Autorin:** Catherine Dobbs ist eine private Börsenhändlerin.

**Der Vorschlag:** Der Euro wird ersetzt durch einen Währungskorb namens „Newney“, ähnlich wie der ECU vor der Euro-Einführung. Alle Verträge, Konten und Kredite werden in diesen Währungskorb umgewandelt. Nur neue Verträge und neue Zahlungen werden von vornherein in der neuen Währung des jeweiligen Landes abgeschlossen.

**Die Vorteile:** Die Umstellung fällt sehr leicht. Es gibt keinen Grund, Bargeld von einem Land ins andere zu schaffen.

**Die Nachteile:** Jeder Europäer hat plötzlich Konten und Kredite in fremder Währung. Der Währungskorb wird mehr wert sein als die neue Drachme, was die Kredite für Griechen enorm verteuert – aber er wird weniger wert sein als die neue Mark, was die Ersparnisse der Deutschen entwertet.

## C) Pleiten zulassen



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**Der Autor:** Jonathan Tepper ist Chefredakteur eines Börsen-Analyseblattes, Fondsmanager und Buchautor.

**Der Vorschlag:** Tepper liefert weniger einen Vorschlag für die Abwicklung. Dafür analysiert er historische Beispiele – in den vergangenen 100 Jahren sind mehr als 100 Währungsunionen zerbrochen. Tepper schätzt die Folgen ab: Ein Euro-Ausstieg wird viele Pleiten nach sich ziehen, aber diese Pleiten wären sowieso nötig. Der Ausstieg ist rechtlich machbar, und die Wirtschaft wird nicht dauerhaft leiden.



**Die Vorteile:** Nach dem Ausstieg kehrt die alte Wirtschaftsleistung schnell zurück – das ist die Erfahrung aus den vergangenen Jahren.

**Die Nachteile:** Viele Banken und Privathaushalte gehen pleite. Monatelange Kapitalverkehrskontrollen werden nötig.

#### D) Banken entflechten



© Hoang Le, Kien

**Die Autoren:** Jens Nordvig und Nick Firoozye sind Währungsanalysten der Investmentbank Nomura.

**Der Vorschlag:** Der Euro wird anfangs nicht aufgelöst, sondern durch einen neuen ECU ersetzt – einen Korb aus den Währungen der einzelnen Mitgliedsstaaten. Auf dem Währungsmarkt können sich neue Kurse bilden, gleichzeitig können sich Banken und Firmen an der Börse gegen Kursänderungen absichern. Zudem werden die Währungen nach und nach entflochten. Erst wenn das geschehen ist, wird der Euro abgeschafft.

**Die Vorteile:** Die Umstellung fällt leicht. Es gibt keinen Grund, Bargeld von einem Land ins andere zu schaffen.

**Die Nachteile:** Die Absicherung funktioniert nur eingeschränkt. Klar ist: Der Währungskorb wird mehr wert sein als die neue Drachme, aber weniger als die neue Mark.

#### E) Scheine umtauschen



© dpa

**Der Autor:** Neil Record hat eine Währungshandelsfirma gegründet, die seit fast 30 Jahren besteht.

**Der Vorschlag:** In jedem Land, das den Euro verlässt, wird die Währung durch die neue Landeswährung ersetzt. Euro-Münzen und -Scheine werden durch die neue Währung ersetzt, wenn sie in jenem Land

gedruckt worden sind – egal, wo sie gerade sind. Der Aufdruck zeigt, aus welchem Land sie stammen (bei Scheinen: die Seriennummer).

**Die Vorteile:** Die Umstellung fällt sehr leicht. Es gibt keinen Grund, Bargeld von einem Land ins andere zu schaffen

**Die Nachteile:** Gewinne und Verluste entstehen zufällig. Der Vorschlag erklärt nicht, was mit internationalen Verträgen geschieht, die in Euro ausgestellt sind – zum Beispiel ein Handelsvertrag zwischen Polen und Briten, der in Euro abgerechnet wird.

## F) Schulden begleichen



© dapd

**Der Autor:** Jurre Hermans ist elf Jahre alt und Schüler aus den Niederlanden. Sein Vorschlag wurde von der Jury mit einem Sonderpreis ausgezeichnet, seitdem ist Jurre Hermans auch Medienstar.

**Der Vorschlag:** Die Griechen tauschen ihre Euro an Automaten in Drachmen. Mit dem Euro zahlt die Regierung ihre Schulden zurück. Wer seine Euros nicht tauscht, muss den doppelten Betrag als Strafe zahlen.

**Die Vorteile:** Die griechischen Staatsanleihen werden zurückgezahlt.

**Die Nachteile:** Es gibt nicht genug Bargeld in Griechenland für alle Staatsschulden. Die Schulden von Banken und Firmen werden nicht beglichen. Die Geldmenge im Euroraum schrumpft nicht mit dem Währungsraum. Um den Tausch zu kontrollieren, werden Hausdurchsuchungen nötig.

## The French media

### Denouncing Pravda and the Taliban liberals

The Economist Blog Elysée Apr 6th 2012, 13:19 by S.P. | PARIS

APOLOGIES to those readers for whom the following is one self-referential detail too far, but in light of a previous [posting](#) I thought that the [editorial](#) by Laurent Joffrin in this week's *Le Nouvel Observateur*

<http://tempsreel.nouvelobs.com/laurent-joffrin/20120405.OBS5611/the-economist-la-pravda-du-capital.html>

might be of interest. It is quite telling about the current political debate in France. Mr Joffrin is a respected senior French journalist, who currently edits the weekly news-magazine and was previously editor of *Libération*, a left-wing daily.

His editorial is entitled “*The Economist*, Pravda of finance”. For those who don't read French, here is a rough translation of his argument:

These French really are useless. A nation that claims to be the most political on earth has bred a pitiful class of politicians, each of whose programme is as dreadful as the other...Thus *The Economist*, well-known worldwide, puts it in an article explicitly entitled “France in denial”...An article immediately picked up in France with the successful theme: “We French, we really are useless”. An article immediately discussed by leaders with the theme: “They really are useless (take your pick: politicians, voters, journalists etc”.

To understand the attack, says Mr Joffrin, the French need to understand *The Economist* better. He offers a summary:

*The Economist*, contrary to what many French people think, has nothing impartial about it. Founded in the 19th century to support by any means free trade and the market economy, it defends the most liberal theses with an exemplary rigidity. Whichever the year, season, or century, *The Economist*, a journalistic parrot, will argue that taxes should be cut, rules lightened, the role of the state reduced, and baleful ideas about equality or justice rolled back...It is presented as the bible of economists. It's the “Pravda” of finance.

Mr Joffrin continues:

As to its competence, moreover, a little visit to its internet site is enlightening. At the start of 2008, when publishing its annual forecasts, *The Economist* foresaw nothing of the financial crisis that would break out six months later and predicted an exceptional year for stockmarkets...The diagnostic that *The Economist* makes of France is true to form: as always, public spending must be cut, labour-market protection abolished, taxes on the rich lowered, and the state rolled back...*The Economist* forgets two things: the two main candidates envisage a progressive reduction of deficits over four or five years, one through fiscal reform, the other through limiting spending. To go any faster, *The Economist* forgets, would be to risk recession, which would make everything impossible, and an evolution à la grecque.

His closing remarks include the line “One should not submit foolishly to a little Taliban of liberalism”.

Anybody still reading at this point (sorry that this is turning out to be so long) might like to know that the French website of *The Huffington Post* has run a counter [piece](#) by Fathi Derder, a Swiss member of parliament. Best to let Mr Derder speak for himself:

I like the French media and politics. But sometimes I am disheartened by “left bank” politico-media autism. The record was achieved on Thursday by Laurent Joffrin, in *Le Nouvel Obs*. He took violently against *The Economist*. What had this honourable British paper done? Nothing special: under the title “France in Denial”, it simply laid out, once again, the weaknesses of the French system. A reminder of well-known facts. So well-known that I was almost disappointed by a newspaper that is usually very original...This reminder of the self-evident nonetheless seems to anger Joffrin. Whose main argument consists of saying: “it’s not true”. The proof, according to Joffrin? *The Economist* did not foresee the 2008 crisis. And the point is? A childish argument, and a nice own goal which shows that *The Economist* was right: France and denial, it’s one and the same.”

Mr Derder continues with a long and generous defence of *The Economist*, which I will spare readers who have made it this far. But the final word goes to Gaspard Koenig, who is currently running for election in London as a Liberal candidate for a French overseas constituency at June’s legislative election, and was formerly speechwriter for Christine Lagarde. He has just posted a thoughtful [piece](#), also on *The Huffington Post* French site, about the rejection of liberalism in France.

Noting the absence of liberal arguments in the French debate, he says that “Since the crushing failure of Alain Madelin at the 2002 presidential elections, [liberals in France] scarcely dare show their face.” Today, in his view, most presidential candidates, who insist that they do support deficit reduction, are actually saying:

Let’s move forward more slowly towards the precipice, but whatever we do let’s not change direction...How is it possible to disagree with *The Economist*, whose title last week was “France in Denial”.

Mr Koenig goes on to make a case so seldom heard in political debate in France, which is the need "to promote entrepreneurs by all means (including fiscal policy), to open regulated professions (such as taxis) to competition, and to simplify a rigid and Kafkaesque labour code (which has grown from 2,300 pages in 2000 to 3,000 today!)."

He ends with a nice quote from Georges Pompidou: “Stop annoying the French! Let them live a little and you will see that everything will be better!”

## Fathi Derder

Parlementaire suisse, membre du parti libéral radical, journaliste

### La France, entre déni de réalité et chanson paillarde

Publication: 5/04/2012 15h54

J'aime la politique et les médias français. Mais parfois, l'autisme politico-médiatique tendance "rive gauche" me décourage. Le record est atteint ce jeudi par Laurent Joffrin, dans *Le Nouvel Obs*. Il s'en prend violemment à *The Economist*. Or, qu'a fait l'honorable journal britannique? Rien de spécial: sous le titre "[La France dans le déni](#)", il a simplement énuméré, une fois de plus, les failles du système français. Un rappel des faits connus. Si connus que j'en fus presque déçu pour ce journal habituellement très original.

*The Economist* rappelle le déficit ininterrompu depuis près de 40 ans, la dette abyssale, le chômage chronique qui plombe les banlieues, et en face, des candidats dont l'essentiel des propositions se limitent à taxer les riches. Ou à parler d'autre chose que d'économie. En balayant le débat sur le triple A pour s'écharper sur la viande halal.

Ce rappel des évidences semble pourtant fâcher Joffrin. Dont l'essentiel de l'argumentaire consiste à dire: "même pas vrai". La preuve selon Joffrin? *The Economist* n'avait pas vu venir la crise de 2008. Quel rapport avec la choucroute? Argumentaire enfantin, et un bel autogoal qui démontre que *The Economist* avait raison: la France et le déni, ça ne fait qu'un. Ou du moins pour une certaine France, la position de Joffrin est une belle illustration d'une réelle forme d'autisme politico-médiatique.

En outre, cet éditto révèle de terribles lacunes chez Joffrin (ou une certaine mauvaise foi): *The Economist* est un journal libéral, dans le sens le plus noble du mot: il est libre. Ce n'est certainement pas, comme le dit Joffrin, la "*Pravda*" du capital.

Si vous lisiez *The Economist*, monsieur Joffrin, vous sauriez que c'est même l'anti-*Pravda*. *The Economist* est un des journaux les plus critiques du système. Il s'attaque régulièrement à la politique de gouvernements de droite (comme Merkel ou Sarkozy) et s'emploie inlassablement à dénoncer les dérives financières. C'est un journal irrévérencieux, impertinent, et brillant. Libéral, certes, voire libertaire, mais en tout cas pas avocat du capitalisme. Quant à la crise de 2008, vous faites référence au numéro spécial édité chaque année... Que visiblement vous ne connaissez pas: il ne paraît pas en début d'année, mais à la fin de l'année qui précède... Petit détail, mais qui a son importance: de toute évidence, vous ne lisez pas *The Economist*. Et si vous le lisiez, vous auriez découvert qu'il a permis, au fil des semaines, de voir arriver la crise, de l'expliquer, de la comprendre, et de trouver des remèdes pour en sortir. Sans dogmatisme. Mais vous avez préféré un raccourci, qui ne fait pas honneur à notre profession. Je le regrette.

En fait, monsieur Joffrin: votre commentaire dégouline de jalousie. *The Economist* est un vrai journal de référence, lui. Il est lu aux quatre coins du monde, respecté, et en plus, il gagne de l'argent (bouh l'horrible capitaliste!). Il est lu, dévoré même par des lecteurs passionnés. Les articles sont brillamment rédigés, avec humour et cette pointe d'ironie british qui vous fait tant défaut. Je vous en conjure: lisez-le plus souvent...

Quant au problème de fond, il demeure: la France va mal. Très mal, et les candidats ne proposent rien, ou presque. Pour citer un journal français: les candidats proposent un "saupoudrage de nouvelles dépenses et d'allègements sociaux supplémentaires, compensés par des impôts à la portée vite amputée". C'était dans [Les Echos](#), le 20 mars dernier, sous la plume de l'excellent Jean-Marc Vittori. Ah oui, je sais ce que vous pensez: *Les Echos*, c'est aussi la "*Pravda*" du capital... Décidément: ils sont partout!

A la réflexion sérieuse, vous préférez, dans une grande tradition française, la chanson paillarde, avec cette conclusion historique: "Et merde au journal d'Angleterre, qui nous a déclaré la guerre"... On dirait du Mélenchon... C'est à la fois le charme et le drame de la France: au moment le plus grave, on trouve toujours le moyen de chanter. Comme disait Coluche, la France, à l'image du coq, "le seul oiseau qui arrive à chanter les pieds dans la m..."

[Gaspard Koenig](#) Candidat libéral à Londres pour les élections législatives 2012

## Le rejet du libéralisme est le point d'accord de tous les candidats

Publication: 6/04/2012 06h00

Il semble y avoir au moins un point d'accord entre les principaux partis dans cette campagne électorale: le rejet du libéralisme. Dès son intervention télévisée de la fin janvier, Nicolas Sarkozy avait pris soin de condamner le "libéralisme sans frein et sans limite". François Bayrou, dans son livre-programme *La France Solidaire*, conspu à son tour le "libéralisme individualiste". Quant à François Hollande, il ne manque pas une occasion, comme encore à Nice il y a quelques jours, de dénoncer derrière la crise financière la "crise du libéralisme". Les autres candidats, de Jean-Luc Mélenchon à Marine Le Pen en passant par Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, se gardent bien de dire autre chose. Les libéraux n'ont qu'à bien se cacher. D'ailleurs, depuis l'échec retentissant d'Alain Madelin aux présidentielles de 2002, ils n'osent plus guère montrer le bout de leur nez.

C'est dommage. Car s'il y a bien une chose dont la France a profondément besoin aujourd'hui, c'est de libéralisme. Notre Etat qui fut Providence est devenu Fatalité. Tout en prélevant chaque année près de 44% de la richesse nationale en impôts, l'Etat est incapable d'endiguer la spirale de la dette: la Cour des Comptes estime que, en l'absence de réformes drastiques, celle-ci devrait atteindre 100% du PIB d'ici 2015, soit un niveau proche de la banqueroute. Loin de promettre des coupes claires dans la dépense publique (qui culmine aujourd'hui à 56% du PIB, contre 45% en Allemagne par exemple), les candidats chipotent sans rire sur leurs prévisions respectives de "baisse de l'augmentation de la dépense publique". Autant dire: avancer plus lentement vers le précipice, mais surtout ne pas changer de direction. A l'heure où le Royaume-Uni de David Cameron, puis l'Italie de Mario Monti, et tout récemment l'Espagne de Mariano Rajoy ont entamé des cures d'austérité sans précédent, les politiques français continuent à conter fleurette à leurs électeurs. Comment ne pas donner raison à *The Economist*, qui titrait la semaine dernière: "La France dans le déni".

Les libéraux, parmi lesquels j'ose me compter, ne sont pas que des Cassandre. Ils proposent aussi des solutions, par exemple un modèle totalement alternatif pour la France, que je suggère à toutes les équipes de campagne d'étudier urgemment: l'économie de marché. Voilà qui supposerait, entre autres, de promouvoir par tous les moyens (y compris fiscaux) les entrepreneurs, d'ouvrir à la concurrence les professions réglementées (comme les taxis), et de simplifier un code du travail rigide et kafkaïen (passé de 2300 pages en 2000 à 3200 pages aujourd'hui!). Sans renoncer à s'attaquer à la cloison la plus épaisse, la plus imperméable, la plus rouillée de la société française: le statut de la fonction publique, qui enferme 20 % de la population active dans des procédures et des logiques administratives d'un autre temps. Autant de sujets cruciaux, sans doute ouverts à discussion, mais inexplicablement absents des débats actuels.

N'oublions pas enfin que les libéraux marchent sur deux jambes: la libéralisation économique d'un côté, la protection des libertés individuelles de l'autre, pour rendre aux citoyens, maternés par l'Etat-nounou, le sens de la responsabilité individuelle. Contre Hadopi, contre les fichiers biométriques, contre l'avalanche réglementaire à chaque fait divers, je suggère de mettre à l'épreuve la recommandation révolutionnaire de George Pompidou: "Cessez d'emmerder les Français! Laissez-les vivre un peu et vous verrez que tout ira mieux".

C'est un Français, Maine de Biran, qui inventa il y a deux siècles la belle notion de "libéralisme". Puissent aujourd'hui ses compatriotes retrouver, derrière le mot, le goût de la liberté.

## The French media

### France-bashing and The Economist

The Economist Apr 4th 2012, 8:07 by S.P. | PARIS



OUR [cover story](#) and [report](#) on France has stirred quite a bit of interest here over the past week. It was an item on the France 2 [main evening news](#) on Friday (choose *vendredi*, and forward to 12.17) and led [Le Grand Journal](#), the flagship evening show on Canal +. Most of the daily papers have written about it; and I've spoken about it on various radio and television shows, including a debate on [Mots Croisés](#) on Monday night on France 2, which devoted a special segment to the article.

Often, the French media are fairly, if not outwardly, hostile to what they call “Anglo-Saxon” France-bashing (although I don't agree that this is what we do). In the past, we've received our fair share of hostile counter-criticism in return. *The Economist* sign on the wall outside the Paris office was smashed up after one [cover](#) we ran a couple of years ago.

There has been a certain amount of indignation this time too. AFP [reported](#) that *The Economist's* idea that the presidential candidates are “in denial” is “ridiculous”, according to the experts it spoke to. Eric Heyer, of the OFCE, a French think-tank, dismissed our story as “French-bashing”, and told AFP that the “timing was very poor”, as figures out the same day as our cover showed that the government had reduced its deficit by more than expected.

In the same article, Jean-Hervé Lorenzi, of the Cercle des Economistes, another think-tank, advised *The Economist* to look more carefully at the British deficit, which is worse than that in France. He is right about the facts, of course; but we have not been indulgent about British public finances either. These remarks reminded me of [comments](#) made by François Baroin, the French finance minister, just weeks before one credit agency stripped France of its Triple A rating. Britain had no lessons to teach France, he said: “I'd prefer to be French than British right now.”

On the whole, however, my feeling is that the French media's response to this cover has been fair, if not largely positive. Many of the reporters I've spoken to have been genuinely interested in what we had to say. “Severe but fair” was *Le Figaro's* conclusion. Even Serge July, former editor of *Libération*, a left-wing newspaper, conceded on *Mots Croisés* that we had a point.

On *Le Grand Journal*, Michel Denisot introduced our cover as “mocking” the two candidates, and



described the analysis as “very very harsh”. But his first guest, Christophe Barbier, editor of *l'Express*, had this to say:

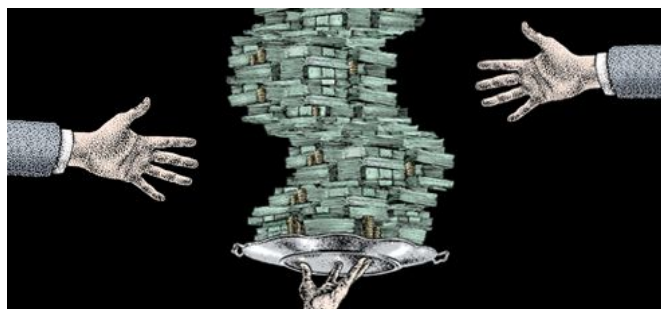
The only important subject, which is the control of public spending and the reduction of public spending, is being raised by neither one candidate nor the other. We've seen a president these past few days explain that it is wonderful that the deficit results are so excellent, as we've managed -5.2% instead of -5.7%! No! The results are very bad, but less bad than expected.

I couldn't have put it better myself.

## The trillion-euro illusion

2 April 2012

[De Volkskrant](#) Amsterdam



Vlahovic

**On 29 March, EU finance ministers claimed to have come up with the right numbers with which to shield the eurozone from a new crisis. But it is a sleight-of-hand accounting that could crumble at the first sign of trouble.**

[Marc Peepkorn](#)

In fact, there are no 1,000 billion dollars for the European Stability Mechanism (MES), the emergency fund that Spain and Italy will have to fall back on if bankruptcy threatens.

There are no 800 or 700 billion euros either, which are the amounts that the [official declaration](#) of the Ministers cites with pride. What De Jager and his European colleagues have rolled out is a sham. It's a way of juggling numbers that undermines from the start the credibility of the relief fund, which will become operational on 1 July.

The foundations of this mathematical magic were laid down by the European heads of government. Last autumn, they decided that the combined lending capacity of the existing relief fund [the European Financial Stability Fund, EFSF, created in 2010] and the one yet to be created should be limited to a maximum of 500 billion – in their joyful message, they decided, particular emphasis would be placed on the number 500.

### *Bluff and leftovers*

That there were only 300 billion euros of fresh money – since 200 billion from the older fund had already been used to save Greece, Portugal and Ireland from a rout – was passed over in silence.

In December the same leaders agreed to “reconsider” the amount of the combined fund – Brussels jargon for “increase”. The financial markets, the U.S., the OECD, the IMF had all grasped that even 500 billion fresh euros would not be enough to prevent a targeted action by speculators against just one country (Italy) from spreading to the rest of the eurozone.

The European Commission then proposed a clear plan: by adding unused amounts of the old funds (240 billion) to the new MES, the sum would add up to 740 billion – the one trillion-dollar baby, which would convince the markets and encourage the IMF to beef up its war chest against the euro crisis as well.

Under pressure from Germany, this proposal was rejected on Friday [March 30]. With a wave of a magic wand, the European ministers released something even greater: 800 billion euros. This, it turned out, was the addition of the 500 billion already promised, plus 200 billion on loan from the old fund, plus the 100 billion from the initial emergency aid to Greece: leftovers, plumped up with smoke and mirrors.

It's not the first time eurozone ministers have been guilty of bizarre arithmetic. The former relief fund was also christened the "one trillion dollar baby" at birth in May 2010. It was to include 750 billion euros – 500 billion from the EU and 250 billion from the IMF. Over the following months, the EU share shriveled to 250 billion as a result of additional safeguards needed to loan the money.

### *Primarily to serve as a deterrent*

After much wailing from the political class, the countries of the eurozone decided to boost their contribution to 440 billion. [The Chinese](#) and the systems of financial leverage would multiply this amount by a factor of four or five. But afterwards we heard no more of the Chinese, or of levers.

Five hundred billion, it must be said, is a lot of money for the MES. It's enough to support the Spanish banks, if Madrid comes asking for it. But if the Spanish government and the Italian government knock on the door for the aid at the same time, the MES will not be enough.

According to the ministers, the goal is not to actually use the emergency fund. It's there primarily to serve as deterrent. Ministers do like to roll out the "big bazooka" – hence their heart-throb for the "1,000 billion dollars".

Such a fund would be big enough to keep markets from entertaining for a single second any thought of launching an offensive against a weaker sister of the eurozone. It is precisely on this crucial point, however, that governments are undermining the defence line of the eurozone. For the second time in two years.

## Macro and Other Market Musings

Monday, February 27, 2012

### This is What Ails Europe

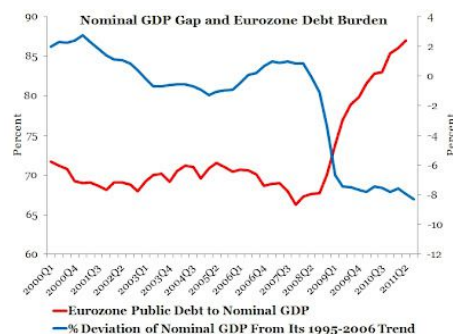
Paul Krugman [argues](#) that the primary problem facing Europe is a monetary one (my bold):

So what does ail Europe? The truth is that the story is mostly monetary. By introducing a single currency without the institutions needed to make that currency work, Europe effectively reinvented the defects of the gold standard — defects that played a major role in causing and perpetuating the Great Depression.

[...]

If the peripheral nations still had their own currencies, they could and would use devaluation to quickly restore competitiveness. But they don't, which means that they are in for a long period of mass unemployment and slow, grinding deflation. **Their debt crises are mainly a byproduct of this sad prospect, because depressed economies lead to budget deficits and deflation magnifies the burden of debt.**

I agree that the Eurozone was a flawed currency union from the start. So yes, what ails Europe is a structural monetary problem. But the monetary problem goes deeper than that. There is also a cyclical monetary problem that is alluded to in the bold passage above. This cyclical dimension can be seen in the figure below:



This figure shows that ECB's failure to stabilize and restore nominal spending to expected levels--as proxied by the 1995-2006 trend--during the crisis as the real culprit behind the Eurozone crisis. This failure to act has been devastating because it means nominal incomes are far lower than were expected when borrowers took out loans fixed in nominal terms. European borrowers, both public and private, are therefore not able to pay back their debt and the result is a fiscal crisis.

The reduced ability for Europeans to payback debt also means that risk premiums on countries with lots of debt or ones perceived to have debt problems increases, further raising these country's debt burden with higher financing costs. The fiscal crisis gets bigger, and being easy to observe, gets wrongly credited as the cause of the Eurozone's problems. Consequently, the Eurozone crisis is prescribed with the fiscal solution of austerity. The real solution, then, requires the ECB to restore nominal incomes to their originally expected values. This is what ails Europe.

## A Divorce Settlement for the Eurozone

Authors: [Arnab Das](#) & [Nouriel Roubini](#) · April 2nd, 2012 · [Comments \(0\)](#) Share This Print 0 0

From the [FT](#):

The European Central Bank has averted disaster, sparking a powerful relief rally – but nothing fundamental has been resolved. Greece may need another debt restructuring; Portugal and Ireland may need restructuring too. Spain and Italy may yet come under the gun. Banking crises are hardly ever resolved without removing toxic assets or recapitalisation. The eurozone still lacks essential features of monetary unions that have stood the test of time; and planned reforms may exacerbate latent fiscal, banking and external imbalances, leaving it less, rather than more, resilient to regional shocks.

Splitting up may be hard to do, but it can be better than sticking to a bad marriage. The periphery debt crisis threatens to engulf the core in huge bank capital shortfalls and fiscal liabilities, trapping both in protracted stagnation. This reflects possibly intractable eurozone design flaws. So we propose the following amicable divorce settlement.

Countries leaving the eurozone must rebalance away from growth led by debt, towards export- and income-led growth. Members of a “rump” eurozone should rebalance toward domestic demand. The EU free trade arrangement is critical to this end. Ideally, five distressed peripherals – Portugal, Ireland, Italy, Greece and Spain – would exit, negotiating bridge financing.

Currency realignment would aid this adjustment. It is far better to restore competitiveness through devaluation than by changing relative prices with a fixed nominal exchange rate, which implies protracted debt deflation, potentially ending in disorderly defaults and exits in any case, or sustained inflation above target in surplus countries. There would of course be disruption even in a cooperative, partial dismantling of the currency union, but it would be in everyone’s interest to minimise the damage by adhering to the agreed exit strategy.

This strategy would ensure exiting countries’ viability and the euro’s credibility. It would maintain the EU customs union to the benefit of all member states; and set a monetary framework for the rump ECB and exiting national central banks.

A transitional monetary framework would effectively reverse the exchange rate mechanism that led to the euro: FX targeting by exiting national central banks, with ECB support to avert currency collapse, capital flight and a resultant surge in inflation. New FX trading corridors would be widened in steps as inflation and exchange rate risk premia returned to normal.

After the transition, independent national central banks and the ECB would implement congruent inflation targets, averting protectionism in the wider EU by restraining competitive devaluation. Exiting countries would be small, open economies relative to the rump eurozone, where FX movements would quickly pass into inflation, inducing them to avoid maxi-devaluations that could provoke wage price spirals.

Unlike other currency regime changes, FX corridors would not be threatened by the inadequate FX reserves of exiting countries. The ECB would buy the new currencies at the floor of the trading band, to mitigate losses from currency collapses and disorderly defaults. This element of the plan would put the burden of financing adjustment and exit on the ECB and remaining eurozone members. But transitional alimony or one-off settlements are often the key to amicable divorces; transitional official financing would mitigate losses and defaults, as in many currency regime changes, and facilitate EU survival and cohesion – helping to avoid the de-globalisation that often follows financial crises.

A clear, consistent legal framework for exit is crucial. We would redenominate all contracts made under domestic laws into the new currencies at the time of exit. We would retain euro denomination for contracts made under foreign law, subject to the territorial connection of the contract or obligor, in line with consensus legal opinion.

Exiting countries should accelerate the “domestication” of external debts before the transition to minimise balance sheet mismatches. Imbalances in the payments system would be redenominated by negotiation and netted between the ECB and national central banks. The widening of FX trading corridors as risk premia fell would lessen balance sheet effects. An eventual free float of currencies by inflation-targeting, independent central banks would restore macroeconomic shock absorbers and aid policy credibility.

Banks and financial markets pose the gravest immediate threats to the exit strategy. Pursuing domestication prior to exit would reduce credit losses and currency risk. The ECB’s currency support would allow time for hedging and repayment of euro-denominated obligations. These policies would mitigate damage to the banking system and support economic activity and investment. However, doubts about the strategy might spark capital flight, requiring temporary bank nationalisation, curbs on deposit withdrawals and greater use of non-cash payments, as well as temporary capital controls.

We have divorce laws because amicable divorce is better for all concerned than enduring the chronic depressions that accompany bad marriages. The eurozone should devise plans for orderly exit sooner rather than later, because delaying often makes break-up more costly.

*The writers are managing director and chairman of Roubini Global Economics*

## Rekordarbeitslosigkeit in Europa

### Jeden Monat werden es Hunderttausende mehr

FAZ 02.04.2012 · Mehr Arbeitslose hat die EU nie registriert: Fast 25 Millionen Menschen suchen einen Erwerb. Besonders schlimm ist es in Südeuropa - vor allem für Jugendliche und junge Erwachsene.



© dpa Massenarbeitslosigkeit - Massenprotest: Demonstration in Madrid im Juli vergangenen Jahres

Die schwierige wirtschaftliche Lage in vielen europäischen Ländern lässt die Arbeitslosigkeit weiter steigen. Im Februar waren erstmals seit Beginn der Aufzeichnung vor rund vierzehn Jahren mehr als 17 Millionen Menschen in den 17 Eurostaaten ohne Arbeitsstelle, teilte das europäische Statistikamt Eurostat am Montag in Luxemburg mit. Die Durchschnittsquote stieg im Vorjahresvergleich um 0,8 Punkte auf 10,8 Prozent.

In der gesamten EU waren mehr als 24,5 Millionen erwerbslos gemeldet, die Quote kletterte auf 10,2 Prozent. Im vergangenen Jahr verschärfte sich die Situation monatlich: Seit dem Frühjahr 2011 ist die Zahl der Arbeitslosen im Durchschnitt um jeweils 200 000 pro Monat gestiegen.

Am schlimmsten ist die Lage in den hochverschuldeten Eurostaaten. Allein in Spanien sind nun mehr als 5 Millionen Menschen ohne Arbeitsstelle, das bedeutet eine Rekordquote von 23,6 Prozent. In Griechenland sind 21 Prozent arbeitslos. Die Hellenen weisen mit fast 7 Prozentpunkten den größten Zuwachs innerhalb eines Jahres auf.

Auch in Portugal und Irland legten die Quoten auf rund 15 Prozent zu. Die stärksten Rückgänge innerhalb der vergangenen zwölf Monate gab es in den Ländern des Baltikums, wobei Lettland und Litauen immer noch Quoten von mehr als 14 Prozent haben.

## Deutschland an vierter Stelle

Am niedrigsten ist die Arbeitslosigkeit in Österreich (4,2 Prozent), den Niederlanden (4,9 Prozent), Luxemburg (5,2 Prozent) und Deutschland (5,7 Prozent). In Frankreich liegt sie mit 10 Prozent knapp unter dem Durchschnitt.

Besonders hoch ist die [Jugendarbeitslosigkeit](#) - sie liegt nun im Durchschnitt bei 21,6 Prozent. 5,5 Millionen Personen im Alter unter 25 Jahren sind ohne Arbeit. In Spanien und Griechenland sind die Jugendarbeitslosenquoten über 50 Prozent gestiegen. Deutschland verzeichnete mit 8,2 Prozent den niedrigsten Wert.

Die Europäische Kommission zeigte sich besorgt über die Entwicklung auf den Arbeitsmärkten. Bei aller Bedeutung von Einsparungen der öffentlichen Hand komme es drauf an, Wachstum und Arbeitsplatzschaffung besser miteinander zu verknüpfen.

## **Warten auf Vorschläge**

Wer nur auf Sparen setze, verschärfe die Rezession; daher müsse der Arbeitsmarkt stärker in Wirtschafts- und Finanzpolitik berücksichtigt werden, erläuterte eine Kommissionssprecherin. Demographischer Wandel, der Umbau zu mehr Nachhaltigkeit sowie der technologischer Wandel zwingen zu Arbeitsmarktreformen sowie einer besseren fachlichen Qualifikation der Arbeitskräfte.

Vorschläge dazu will die Kommission am 19. April vorlegen. Sie sollen Wege zu einem „echten europäischen Arbeitsmarkt“ sowie zur besseren Nutzung von EU-Fördermitteln aufzeigen. Allein im EU-Sozialfonds stünden noch 30 Milliarden Euro ungenutzter Haushaltsmittel zur Verfügung.

Quelle: FAZ.NET



## Schuldenkrise "Wir befinden uns in einem Teufelskreis"

Wenn es Rettung geben soll, dann müssen es die Regierungen tun, sagt der frühere Chefvolkswirt der EZB, Jürgen Stark. Im Interview warnt er vor steigender Inflation.

- **DIE ZEIT** Von Marietta Kurm-Engels | Gabor Steingart | Christian Vits
- 26.03.2012 - 14:15 Uhr



Jürgen Stark, von Juni 2006 bis Ende 2011 Chefvolkswirt der Europäischen Zentralbank (EZB)

**Frage:** Herr Stark, wie weit dürfen Zentralbanken bei der Krisenbewältigung Ihrer Ansicht nach gehen?

**Jürgen Stark:** Die Zentralbanken müssen eine Rolle spielen in dieser Krise, und ich glaube, diese Rolle haben sie gespielt, als die Krise akut war. Rasches Handeln, Zinssenkungen, solange die Preisstabilität nicht gefährdet ist, und substituierend für den nicht funktionierenden Interbankenmarkt eintreten. Das ist geschehen. Nur, für jede solche Maßnahme gilt: Sie darf nur so lange zur Anwendung kommen, wie das dringend notwendig ist. Es darf aber nicht zu einer Perpetuierung dieses Einsatzes kommen – und diese Perpetuierung sieht man derzeit. Wenn ich die geldpolitischen Bedingungen global betrachte, sind sie heute lockerer als auf dem Höhepunkt der Krise nach Lehman.

**Frage:** Die Notenbanken sind zum neuen Heilsbringer der Politiker geworden.

**Stark:** Es ist eine Erwartungshaltung gegenüber den Zentralbanken entstanden, die sie zum Teil selbst geschürt haben, indem sie sagten, wir stehen bereit, wir retten alle. In dieser Erwartungshaltung sind immer neue Forderungen auf die Notenbanken zugekommen. Im Grunde sollen sie alles tun: Nicht nur Preisstabilität gewährleisten, sondern auch die Arbeitslosigkeit gering halten, die Zinsstruktur über das Fristenspektrum steuern, die notwendigen Bilanzanpassungen mildern. Es ist eine multifunktionale Aufgabe, die den Zentralbanken plötzlich zugewiesen wird – und das gefährdet ihren eigentlichen Auftrag.

**Frage:** Die Europäische Zentralbank hat den Banken im Dezember und Februar mehr als eine Billion Euro für drei Jahre [zum günstigen Leitzins zur Verfügung gestellt](#). Haben Sie für die Einführung der Maßnahme gestimmt?

**Stark:** EZB-Präsident [Mario Draghi](#) hat das Thema geöffnet und gesagt, dass ich diesem Vorgehen zugestimmt habe. Ich habe zugestimmt, aber unter anderen Bedingungen, nämlich ohne Zinssenkung im Dezember.

**Frage:** Sind diese Billionensummen, die da zum Einsatz kommen, eigentlich noch beherrschbar?

**Stark:** Wir haben ein Bilanzvolumen der Europäischen Zentralbank von mehr als drei Billionen Euro. Das ist eine enorme Aufblähung. Das heißt, die Bilanz hat sich seit 2007 mehr als verdreifacht und beläuft sich nun auf immerhin etwa 30 Prozent der Wirtschaftsleistung des Euro-Gebiets. Aber es geht nicht alleine um das Volumen.

**Frage:** Worum noch?

**Stark:** Durch diese Dreijahresverpflichtung ist ein Stück Flexibilität der EZB verloren gegangen. Diese langfristigen Kredite ersetzen Operationen mit kurzer Frist. Damit hat sich das, was kurzfristig an Liquiditätssteuerung möglich ist, auf weniger als zehn Prozent der insgesamt bereitgestellten Kredite reduziert. Allerdings gibt es eine Opting-out-Klausel, das heißt, die Möglichkeit, die langfristigen Dreijahreskredite bereits nach Ablauf eines Jahres zurückzuzahlen.

**Frage:** Glauben Sie denn, dass diese Ausstiegsklausel eine Bank wahrnimmt?

**Stark:** Ich weiß es nicht. Die [Europäische Zentralbank](#) hat ja auch aktiv für die Teilnahme an dieser Operation geworben. Es sei kein Stigma für die Banken, sich mit dem günstigen Geld zu versorgen.

**Frage:** Ist das nicht eine Subventionierung des Finanzsektors?

**Stark:** Es ist die Ermöglichung sogenannter Carry Trades. Das bedeutet, die Banken erhalten Kredit zu einem Zins von einem Prozent und können in einigen Ländern Staatspapiere kaufen, die mit viereinhalb bis fünf Prozent verzinst werden.

**Frage:** Im Klartext: Das ist der todsichere Profit, eine Einladung an die Banken zum Geldverdienen.

**Stark:** Ja natürlich, sie könnten aber auch die Realwirtschaft finanzieren. Es schreibt ihnen keiner vor, wie sie das Geld verwenden.

**Frage:** Sind wir in eine Staatsfinanzierung eingestiegen?

**Stark:** Wir befinden uns in einem Teufelskreis.

**Frage:** Wie kommt die EZB aus den vielen krisenbedingten Notmaßnahmen wieder heraus?

**Stark:** Eine Zentralbank muss immer, gerade bei diesen sogenannten Nicht-Standard-Maßnahmen, den Ausstieg mit durchdenken, am besten in verschiedenen Szenarien. Aber bei einer solchen Verpflichtung über drei Jahre wird der Ausstieg schwieriger. Die Frage lautet: Wie bewerkstellige ich eine Schrumpfung der Bilanz, eine Bilanzverkürzung? Es ist nicht allein die Größenordnung, es ist die Struktur, es ist die Laufzeit der Verpflichtung und die Unmöglichkeit für die Zentralbank, diese Liquidität rasch wieder zu absorbieren, die heute enorme Probleme macht. Historisch wissen wir, dass jede besonders starke Expansion der Zentralbankbilanz mittelfristig zu Inflation führt.

**Frage:** Angenommen, die Europäische Zentralbank beendet ihre Notmaßnahmen und normalisiert ihre Zinspolitik. Kann sie sich überhaupt abkoppeln von diesem globalen Trend zur Politik des billigen Geldes?

**Stark:** Sowohl die Politik als auch die Zentralbanken sind der Versuchung erlegen, allen Problemen der Welt durch eine Flutung der Märkte zu begegnen. Da dies nun mal ein globales Phänomen ist, wird die Abkopplung schwierig, wenn es eine Entwicklung in Richtung höherer Preise geben sollte. Im Augenblick zeigt sich diese erhöhte Liquiditätsversorgung noch nicht in den Güter- und Dienstleistungspreisen. Aber sie zeigt sich in den Rohstoffpreisen und den Vermögenspreisen – eindeutig. Und das wirkt durch.

**Frage:** Können Sie das belegen?

**Stark:** Im Moment haben wir eine schwache Konjunktur, aber Inflationspotenzial hat sich aufgebaut. Wir sind nicht in normalen Umständen, wir haben diese ultra-lockere Geldpolitik global plus eine sehr

expansive Fiskalpolitik in den meisten entwickelten Volkswirtschaften, so dass sich aus dieser Konstellation eine Änderung der Inflationserwartungen ergeben kann.

**Frage:** Wie schnell würde uns die höhere [Inflation](#) treffen?

**Stark:** Ich kann hier keine Prognose abgeben. Aber bedenken Sie, dass sowohl die Kommission wie auch der EZB-Stab ihre Inflationsraten für 2012 nach oben revidiert haben. Wir sind in einem Prozess, in dem die Erwartung, dass die Inflationsrate über die nächsten Monate unter zwei Prozent kommt, in immer weitere Ferne rückt. Wir werden 2012 nicht unter zwei Prozent liegen.

**Frage:** Könnte die Preissteigerung zu einem globalen Problem werden?

**Stark:** Das Risiko gilt auch für die Schwellenländer. Ich sehe hier ein globales Phänomen.

**Frage:** Ist der Konsens verloren gegangen, dass Inflationsbekämpfung ein lohnendes Ziel ist? Manche verkünden Inflation schon als die Lösung für die Staatsschuldenkrise.

**Stark:** Preisstabilität ist aus meiner Sicht eine kulturelle Errungenschaft, die als selbstverständlich gesetzt wird. Wir sind durch eine lange Phase mit niedrigen Inflationsraten gegangen, das mag auch das Verhalten Einzelner verändert haben. Vergleichen Sie heute die kurzfristigen und langfristigen Realzinsen mit der Situation vor zehn oder zwanzig Jahren. Die Realzinsen in Deutschland, den USA und England sind negativ. Und negative Realzinsen – auch im zehnjährigen Bereich – bedeuten ja praktisch schon eine Enteignung. Ist das auf dem kalten Wege bereits die Vorbereitung auf eine Phase, in der wir weiter mit negativen Realzinsen rechnen müssen aufgrund höherer Inflationsraten in der Zukunft? In Anfängen wird dies spürbar – und deshalb auch die Zurückhaltung von Investoren.

**Frage:** Wann ist in Ihnen der Gedanke gereift, aus diesem System der wundersamen Geldvermehrung, dessen Teil Sie waren, auszusteigen?

**Stark:** Das begann bereits im Frühjahr 2010 mit dem Einstieg der EZB in den Kauf von Staatspapieren. Die Käufe finden im Handel, am Sekundärmarkt statt. Das ist legal, das muss man sehen, es ist eine Möglichkeit. Nur hat sich für mich hier das Problem ergeben, dass ich – über den Tellerrand hinausdenkend – gesehen habe: Wenn in einem solchen Land, in dem die EZB interveniert, ein größerer Unfall passieren sollte, dann wird die EZB mit hineingezogen, und sie könnte aus solchen Interventionen Verluste erleiden. Und damit, unabhängig vom Land, um das es geht, im Rest des Euro-Gebiets erheblich an Reputation verlieren. Letztlich würde das Vertrauen in die Zentralbank leiden.

**Frage:** Ist dieser befürchtete Vertrauensverlust der Schlüssel, um die Motive Ihres Handelns zu verstehen?

**Stark:** Für mich ist ein ganz entscheidender Punkt, dass in dem Regime, in dem wir uns befinden – mit Geld ohne Metallbindung, ohne die Bindung an Gold oder Silber oder was auch immer –, der einzige Anker die Zentralbank ist. Der Anker ist das Vertrauen in die Zentralbank. Und dies darf nicht zerstört werden. Und wenn Sie verfolgen, unter welchem Druck die EZB vor wenigen Wochen kam, ihren Beitrag zum Schuldenerlass zu leisten, dann ist genau das eingetreten, was zu befürchten stand.

**Frage:** Aber das war nicht Ihr einziger Grund für den Rücktritt.

**Stark:** Der zweite Punkt hängt zusammen mit der Ausweitung der Käufe von Staatspapieren im August 2011, die aus meiner Sicht in der damaligen Phase einen falschen Anreiz gesetzt hat. Den Regierungen wurde signalisiert, wir sind bereit zu intervenieren, aber ihr müsst eure Politik anpassen. Das ging über den Grad an demokratischer Legitimation hinaus, den die EZB besitzt. Die EZB darf ihre Operationen nicht konditionieren, nicht von politischen Entscheidungen in bestimmten Ländern abhängig machen. Entweder ist das eine geldpolitische Entscheidung, dann soll es für alle gelten. Oder es ist keine

geldpolitische Entscheidung, dann begeben Sie sich in die Abhängigkeit und unter den Zugriff der Politik. Das Vertrauen in die Fähigkeit der Zentralbank geht verloren, die Dinge zu tun, zu denen sie gemäß ihrem Mandat verpflichtet ist.

**Frage:** War der [Rücktritt von Bundesbank-Präsident Axel Weber](#) ein Vorbild für Sie?

**Stark:** Nein, keineswegs. Meine Überlegung war, wie weit trage ich das mit, voll anerkennend, dass eine Zentralbank in einer solchen kritischen Phase auch außergewöhnliche Dinge tun muss. Aber sie darf nie ihr Mandat aus dem Auge verlieren. Und auch wenn kommuniziert wird, es sind geldpolitische Gründe, Staatsanleihen zu kaufen, dann muss man dennoch die Nebeneffekte berücksichtigen. Nämlich dass die Regierungen in den betroffenen Ländern sich damit günstiger refinanzieren konnten. Das lässt sich nicht entkoppeln.

**Frage:** Normalerweise kämpft man dann für seine Überzeugungen.

**Stark:** Natürlich haben wir offene Diskussionen gehabt, die Argumente sind alle auf den Tisch gebracht worden. Aber ich konnte mich mit meinen Argumenten nicht durchsetzen.

**Frage:** Was wäre die Alternative zum Handeln der Europäischen Zentralbank gewesen?

**Stark:** Es muss eine klare Arbeitsteilung zwischen Regierungen und Zentralbanken geben. Man hätte verdeutlichen müssen, die EZB ist nicht dafür da, um Land A oder Land B zu retten. Wenn es Rettung geben soll, dann müssen es die Regierungen tun.

**Frage:** An wen richtete sich denn das Signal, das Sie seinerzeit ausgesendet haben?

**Stark:** Das Signal ging an die Politik. Ich wollte auch an den Maastricht-Vertrag und das ihm zugrunde liegende Konzept erinnern. Implizit ging man mit dem Maastricht-Konzept davon aus, dass ein Mitgliedsland auch zahlungsunfähig werden kann. Die Frage war nur: innerhalb oder außerhalb des Währungsgebiets? Das Konzept wurde innerhalb weniger Stunden verändert. Hat es dafür eine demokratische Legitimation gegeben?

**Frage:** Was hat Ihnen Finanzminister [Wolfgang Schäuble](#) erwidert?

**Stark:** Das Problem, das in Berlin gesehen wurde, waren die Ansteckungseffekte. Nach Land A kommt Land B, kommt Land C – ein nicht endender Prozess. Ansteckungseffekte minimieren hieß für die Regierung: Die Länder, die anfällig sind, müssen ihre Politik verändern. Sie müssen eine Kehrtwende in der Wirtschaftspolitik vornehmen, und gleichzeitig sind die Brandschutzmauern zu erhöhen, hieß es. In dem Sinne, dass man die Volumina erhöht, die die Staaten zur Rettung bereit sind aufzubringen. Aber ist das die Lösung?

[Erschienen im Handelsblatt](#)

- **Quelle:** [Handelsblatt](#)
- **Adresse:** <http://www.zeit.de/wirtschaft/2012-03/juergen-stark-interview/komplettansicht>

## Apple in China

<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/460/retraction>

### Lying to lots of people is very risky

The Economist Democracy in America Mar 19th 2012, 21:15 by M.S.

THE [retraction](#) by "This American Life" of its Mike Daisey story on Apple is the most physically uncomfortable radio listening I've ever experienced. It's full of moments so humiliating that if it weren't for the fact that host Ira Glass himself was the person Mr Daisey had betrayed, it would have seemed exploitative to linger on them. Perhaps journalists are especially sensitive to the pain of being exposed in false communication. I've never "cooked a story", as the Mike Kelly character puts it in "Shattered Glass", but I can still feel the shame from an article a decade ago in which I mentioned an activist's ethnicity, drew a conclusion from it, and then discovered after publication that I'd assumed the wrong ethnicity and never thought to fact-check it. Like Mr Glass (Ira, not Stephen) at the beginning of the retraction episode, I feel a certain level of empathy for Mr Daisey: there's not really any justification for his decision to present things he'd read about as if they'd happened to him, but you can kind of understand it. In a slightly different theatrical genre, that of, say, "[Swimming to Cambodia](#)", his exaggeration and reappropriation might have been acceptable, though not in the show he actually presented, which clearly seemed to be making journalistic truth claims. And not, obviously, on "This American Life".



In view of the fact that Mr Daisey was lying, I have to revisit [the post I wrote on this subject](#) a while back. Like other journos, I feel like I ought to have known Mr Daisey's account was off-base. I've stood outside factory gates at suppliers to big foreign companies in Vietnam, trying to get workers to talk about their complaints. I never met any who were underage. That doesn't mean there are no underage workers in Vietnamese factories on contract to foreign companies; it means they're a very small minority, and you're unlikely to meet any just by spending a few hours standing at the factory gates. As [Josh Barro](#) writes at Forbes.com, almost all of the incidents of poor labour practices at Apple suppliers that Mr Daisey reports did actually happen. It's just that he himself didn't see many of them. And the fact that he claimed to have seen them all so easily, as a non-journalist with no experience in China who just showed up at the gates of Foxconn one day with an interpreter, made it seem as though these violations were incredibly widespread and routine. As Mr Barro says:

[A] key reason Daisey's account was effective is that it depicted a density of horror at Foxconn's Chinese plants. If Daisey could visit just one city for just six days and come out with as much vivid material as he did, imagine what is going on at Foxconn's facilities all over the country. Admitting that many of the conditions he discussed were not uniform and not necessarily common—and not, so far as he could tell, present in Shenzhen—would have made his critique much less damning.

What conclusions should we draw, then, about Apple in China? Here's the conclusion [Matthew Yglesias](#) thinks we should draw (Mr Barro agrees), which is, I think, *not* the conclusion we should draw.

[W]hat Apple stands accused of is complicity in the misery of Chinese workers but its real crime often seems to be exposing our delicate western sensibilities to the misery. You don't read articles about working conditions in factories making socks destined for export to Kazakhstan, and you don't read articles about working conditions on the rice farms that people eagerly leave to go toil in the sock factory. That rice and those socks are invisible to us and so too are the workers. What we need to see and hear about are bad conditions wherever they may be, not just the ones that provide the appealing news hook. When you read something bad about a Foxconn factory and then see that thousands of people line up for the chance of a job at one of them, that really ought to make you wonder. What were those guys doing the day before they decided to stand in line? How did that look?

In my view, this misses the point completely. I don't know what other people are mentally accusing Apple of, but in my book, the relevant question in this whole drama has always been very simple: is Apple adequately ensuring that its Supplier Code of Conduct is being enforced, and is that code of conduct itself adequate? The question is not whether it is sinful to buy an iPhone. The question is not whether Apple is a force for good or evil in the world. The question is not whether trade with China is good or bad. The question is not whether iPhones should be manufactured in America. The question is simply whether Apple is, knowingly or through negligence, allowing widespread violations of its Supplier Code of Conduct, and hence allowing misery to enter the world that has no reason to be here.

It's certainly true that very many Chinese people want to work at Foxconn, and that the conditions at its plants are better than at many other factories in China and far better than conditions in isolated rural agricultural villages. This is precisely why it should be so easy for Foxconn to ensure good (by Chinese standards) working conditions. If thousands of people are lining up for a job at a Foxconn factory, that means there is absolutely no reason for Foxconn factories ever to employ children; they can find adults to do the job. If thousands of people are lining up for a job at a Foxconn factory, there should be no reason why they should need people to work more than 60 hours per week, in violation of Apple's Code of Conduct; they should be able to find other staff to cover those shifts, and spread the wages around. There is just no reason why it would be bad for Apple to do more to ensure that workers are not abused in its suppliers' factories, that safety measures with regard to toxic or inflammable materials are strictly enforced, and so forth. There is no reason why Apple should not stand up for the rights of workers at its suppliers' plants who have organised not to be fired. This is not some kind of crazy activist demand; it's just [what Apple codifies in its own Supplier Code of Conduct](#), which states that its suppliers must "uphold the human rights of workers, and treat them with dignity and respect as understood by the international community":

Suppliers shall not discriminate against any worker based on race, color, age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability, religion, **political affiliation, union membership**, national origin, or marital status in hiring and employment practices such as applications for employment, promotions, rewards, access to training, job assignments, wages, benefits, discipline, and termination.

Mike Daisey told a bunch of lies about his trip to Shenzhen. But as Apple itself states, and [as the New York Times' Charles Duhigg and David Barboza confirm](#), its suppliers do repeatedly employ children, violate safety codes, and retaliate against workers who try to exercise their right to organise. Codes of conduct don't enforce themselves. What on earth is wrong with pushing Apple to try and make life better for the people who make iPads?



There was a time when we were renegades ushering in a new era of photography. Mavericks, really. We kicked those old film cameras into flea-market stalls. Now only pros and artsy types use them. Guess what? We're the ones starting to collect dust. And don't think anyone's going to revisit us. Film cameras occupy the same hip space as vinyl. Where are we going to fall on the technological nostalgia spectrum? Next to the LaserDisc.

## Share Your iPhone Photos With Us: #morningWSJ

It's your turn to show us how you use your phone to snap pictures. We'll feature the best in an online gallery.

Here's how to participate:

- Use your phone to take pictures on the theme: **How do you start your morning?**
- Email the photo to [yourphotos@wsj.com](mailto:yourphotos@wsj.com) or share them on Twitter and Instagram with the hashtag **#morningwsj**
- Include your name, date, time of day, type of phone you used, and location for the photo

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The digital photography revolution was a promise to streamline things for the everyman. To let him shoot as many sunsets and cats wearing bread (seriously, Google it) as he wanted without having to worry about film. Anyone with a laptop could edit like a pro. Like the Brownie and Polaroid before us, we were democratizers of photography.

Not any more. The iPhone hijacked our vision for the future—our legacy!—while we were busy fooling people that more megapixels meant better pictures. (Sorry, Budget Digi Cam, it doesn't.) Talk about simplifying the photographic process—you can shoot, edit, share and order prints without taking your mitts off an iPhone. We're on our way to becoming a footnote on its Wikipedia page.

I know what you're all thinking. Some of us can edit photos. Some of us can post to Facebook. But not like the iPhone. It's quick, intuitive. We're not. Great-looking pictures are so fun and easy to produce that it makes anyone with an Instagram account feel like Terry Richardson and Ansel Adams rolled into one. Camera Awesome might be the device's best photo app. And it's free! And downloadable in minutes! You know how people refresh their user experience with us? They wait two years and spend hundreds on a new camera.

OK, there's a bright side. The DSLR will always be king for serious photographers. All of us take better photos in low-light situations. Android phones may be getting Instagram soon, but they aren't a huge threat—yet. And, uh, we come in more than two colors. Look at Ultra Zoom. He's chartreuse!



If we lose to one of our own, that's one thing. This crazy Lytro camera that lets you choose a focal point after you've taken a picture? Innovative stuff. Maybe we'll invite her to the next meeting. But a phone? Not cool. That's not progress. It's game-changing. And we're in the wrong stadium.

I forget who, but a wise man once said, "A lot of times, people don't know what they want until you show it to them." Let's show it to them. First camera to figure out how to beat the iPhone wins an 8-gig SD card. And I'll throw in this lime-green neoprene case. Except for Micro Four Thirds. You're too bulky for it. Meeting adjourned—see you next year in the parking lot of the old Crazy Eddie headquarters.

#### *HOW TO MAKE YOUR CAMERA PHONE EXTRA-SNAPPY*



*Illustration by*

*Jason Lee for The Wall Street Journal, WSJ Studio, Tara Howard (photo)*

Several iPhone apps can take your photo-taking to the next level.

#### *1. Download These Essential Camera Apps*

Wait, doesn't my iPhone already have a Camera app? Yes. And it's good—the latest one can automatically focus on faces, take crisp HDR shots and be launched quickly from the unlock screen. (Just swipe up.) Why limit yourself to one arrow in your quiver, though? You may have heard of these three Camera replacements before, but they're popular for a reason—out of dozens in the App Store, they're the best.



Camera+

Camera+

## The Effects Master



*Tara Howard/The Wall Street Journal*

The original picture, above, isn't bad.



*Tara Howard/The Wall Street Journal*

With Camera+'s Clarity filter and Lo-Fi effect, it's infinitely better.

The Camera+ app has long been a popular iPhone camera replacement because it can do complex things in a very streamlined way. You can set exposure independent of focus, use image stabilization—it'll automatically take a shot when your hand is steady—and has a burst mode for capturing fast-moving objects or the fleeting smiles of toddlers. But the real reason Camera+ has a permanent place on many a home screen is its editing tools. The Clarity filter is iPhone photography's secret sauce—it adds pro-camera crispness to almost any shot. And the app's 36 FX Effects (Polarize and Magic Hour are two favorites) have adjustable intensities. Snappily adjusting just how much processing you want is what sets this app apart from the countless other camera-and-editing solutions. \$1.99, [campl.us](http://campl.us)



Hipstamatic

*Hipstamatic*

### **The Analog Spirit**



*Lisa Corson/The Wall Street Journal*

Light leaks, vignetting and distorted colors are Hipstamatic trademarks.



*Tara Howard/The Wall Street Journal*

Even your accidental shots will look like high art.

This app helped launch the iPhone photo revolution when it debuted in 2009, not with bleeding-edge tech, but with a geeky love for the analog. Swap out lenses, films and flashes to create different retro-inspired photographs or simply shake the camera to randomize the configuration. As with real film photography, you have to wait for your image to "develop"—pictures take a few seconds to show up. No matter. The results are so cool you'll start thinking instant gratification is overrated. A tip: In the spirit of serendipity, the default framing is random. To take control, double-click the viewfinder. \$1.99, [hipstamatic.com](http://hipstamatic.com)



Camera Awesome

*Camera Awesome*

### **Everything but the Kitchen Sink**

The camera of Camera Awesome, is, well, awesome: It has a lens stabilizer similar to that of Camera+; a Big Button feature that lets you snap a photo by touching any spot on the screen; and in camcorder mode, the app magically captures video seconds before you press record. Its editing tools are even more awe-inspiring: There are almost 300 sophisticated effects, filters, textures and frames at your disposal including the adjustable Awesomize feature, which automatically fixes things you might not have even known were wrong with your photo. Many effects are free. You can buy sets of effects a la carte, or all of them in one fell swoop for \$9.99. It's worth it. The app was developed by photo site SmugMug—pictures taken with the program can be automatically uploaded to the site in full resolution if you're a member.

Free, [awesomize.com](http://awesomize.com)



Tara Howard/The

Wall Street Journal

If you love a particular effect (this is Romany Holiday), you can opt to have all shots automatically processed that way.

## 2. Take the Fun Factor of Your Photos to the Next Level



Instagram

### **The Social Network**

Instagram

You could just use this as a Hipstamatic alternative, but it's really all about the photo-centric social network that is Instagram. If you've ever doubted the quality of iPhone photography, browsing the "Popular" shots will change your mind and inspire you to always have your camera at the ready to take more artful pictures of the world, or, you know, your cat. Free, [instagram.com](http://instagram.com)



Cinemagram

### **The New Art Form**

Cinemagram

Here's how it works: Shoot a few seconds of video with movement, like a dog's tail wagging. Then trace your finger over the area of the video that you want to keep in motion—the surrounding area remains a still image. The result is a Cinemagram, a cool mashup of video and photography. At their best, they look like the quirky special effects of a Georges Méliès film. *\$1.99*, [cinemagr.am](http://cinemagr.am)



Incredibooth

### **The Party Pleaser**

Incredibooth

An addictive pocket-size photo booth from the makers of Hipstamatic. You can use the rear camera to take shots of party people and the front-facing one for self portraits, which—because the photos appear in an old-school, vertical strip of four pictures—are disarmingly charming rather than vain. *\$0.99*, [incredibooth.com](http://incredibooth.com)



DMD Panorama

### **The Landscape Sweeper**

DMD Panorama

The easiest-to-use panoramic picture app on the iPhone. Just launch, take a picture, steadily move the camera to the left or right to slide an on-screen Ying symbol into a Yang symbol—How clever! How Zen!—and the program will automatically stitch together a slick panoramic photo. *\$1.99, [dermandar.com](http://dermandar.com)*



PicFrame

### **The Framer**

PicFrame

Instead of asking graphic-designer friends to create triptychs of your vacation photos in Photoshop, easily crank images out on your own with PicFrame and share them on Facebook and Twitter. An additional \$0.99 lets you overlay text on photos in tons of refined fonts. It's the most fun way to create holiday cards, make party invites and add ironic captions to snapshots. *\$0.99, [picframeapp.com](http://picframeapp.com)*

### 3. Kit Up for Serious Shooting



*F. Martin Ramin for*

*The Wall Street Journal, Styling by Anne Cardenas*

#### Belkin LiveAction Camera Remote

Forget about snapping a group shot with an outstretched arm and friends cramming their heads next to yours. Use the Belkin LiveAction Camera Remote with its accompanying app and shoot from afar. A detachable stand is included for easy iPhone propping. \$35, [belkin.com](http://belkin.com)



*F. Martin Ramin for The Wall Street Journal, Styling by Anne Cardenas*

Try a lens attachment for your iPhone.



Lens attachments on iPhones look a bit gimmicky, but they really work and are a great way to change up your shots. The Ollo Clip comes with fisheye, macro and wide-angle lenses and can be stashed easily in a pocket when not in use. \$70, [olloclip.com](http://olloclip.com)



*F. Martin Ramin for*

*The Wall Street Journal, Styling by Anne Cardenas*

### Hipstacase

The iPhone is slick, which means it can get a little slippery. Keep the device strapped and secured to your wrist with the Hipstacase. It's amazing how much a little lanyard add can add to your confidence. \$40, [hipstamart.com](http://hipstamart.com)

*Can You Handle It?*

Three esoteric grips for the aspiring camera phone Avedon



*Jason Lee for The*

*Wall Street Journal*

The Covert Ops grip

### **The Covert Ops**

Hold phone vertically as if checking texts or stocks. Advanced variant: Use headphones and singing to obfuscate your rule-bending shutterbugging.



*Jason Lee for The*

*Wall Street Journal*

The Statue of Liberty grip

## The Statue of Liberty

Most commonly used at concerts by short people. High angle is also effective in making pets appear antlike in photos.



Jason Lee for The

*Wall Street Journal*

The Steady Poke grip

### The Steady Poke

Apply death-grip to iPhone with one hand. Tap screen with other to reduce "lens shake" commonly caused by one-handed operation. Advisable to use free hand to pull 'chute at 2,600 feet.

*No iPhone? No Problem. The best photo apps for other phones*

While the iPhone has become the center of the camera-phone universe, Android and Windows Phone 7 devices have been diligently catching up. **Instagram** will be available to Android users soon, but meanwhile you can get your retro fix using the editing tools of **PicSay Pro** (\$3.99). Also worth a download is **Paper Camera** (\$1.99), which gives your photos a scratchy, cartoony look like that A-ha video.

If you like the idea of sending postcards, but always thought their photos were cheese-tastic, get **Postagram** (*Free*). Snap that perfect sunset shot and the app will send a postcard print of the photo with a personal message anywhere in the U.S. (\$0.99) or internationally (\$1.99). (It's available for the iPhone, too.)

If you own a device that's running the latest version of Windows Phone 7 then you know it has an excellent out-of-the box camera—they come with dedicated physical shutter buttons, scene modes and the ability to tweak everything from white balance to saturation—but you will still need a good photo editor. The filter-rich **Thumba Cam** (\$0.99) is the simplest to use.

A version of this article appeared Mar. 31, 2012, on page D1 in some U.S. editions of The Wall Street Journal, with the headline: Is the iPhone the Only Camera You Need?

# Exaspérés, les salariés parisiens de la FNAC séquestrent leur patron

Le Monde.fr | 30.03.2012 à 17h46 • Mis à jour le 30.03.2012 à 18h54

Par Pauline Pellissier



Séquestrer son patron, c'est presque devenu un passage obligé pour [faire entendre](#) ses revendications. [Après Siemens, Caterpillar ou Molex](#), c'était jeudi 29 mars aux salariés parisiens de la FNAC de [retenir](#) pendant sept heures [Bruno Ferrec](#), le directeur des neuf magasins de la capitale.

Près de 150 salariés s'étaient invités à la réunion de négociation salariale, organisée dans un hôtel, pour réclamer une hausse des salaires, et particulièrement du salaire d'embauche, exigeant 1 700 euros, contre 1 414 euros aujourd'hui. En réponse, la direction leur a proposé une hausse mensuelle de 15 euros pour les rémunérations les plus basses, en dessous de 1 500 euros. Une concession insuffisante pour les syndicats. *"Mais ce qui nous a le plus choqué, c'est le mépris total envers les salariés. Le directeur a même parlé de 'population' pour évoqué les employés"*, témoigne [Catherine Gaigne](#), déléguée du syndicat SUD.

Face à ce blocage, des assemblées générales étaient organisées vendredi midi dans plusieurs magasins (Etoile, Montparnasse, Forum des Halles) pour [informer](#) les salariés de l'échec des négociations. Le centre logistique de Massy-Palaiseau (Essonne) avait également programmé une AG. Une réunion intersyndicale est prévue mardi 3 avril pour [faire](#) le point sur la situation et peut-être [voter](#) la grève.

## 310 POSTES SUPPRIMÉS

Du côté de la direction, le temps n'est certainement pas aux augmentations, mais à une "modération salariale". Touchée par la crise et la baisse de la [consommation](#), concurrencée par l'[e-commerce](#), la FNAC a connu une chute de son chiffre d'affaires de 3,2 % en 2011. En réaction, le groupe a [annoncé](#) le 13 janvier un plan d'économie de 80 millions d'euros.

Au programme : la réduction des frais généraux (renégociation des loyers des magasins ou des contrats commerciaux) et la suppression de 310 emplois en [France](#), principalement dans les [services](#) financiers, administratifs, les ressources humaines ou la communication. Des postes auparavant rattachés à chaque magasin et qui seront désormais centralisés à l'échelle d'une région.

Pourtant, pour les syndicats, le groupe n'est pas dans une situation critique. *"On nous impose un blocage salarial, alors que dans le même temps, le groupe PPR [propriétaire de la FNAC] annonce des distributions de dividendes pour les actionnaires du même ordre que l'année dernière, à 3,5 euros par action, soit une enveloppe globale de 450 millions"*, s'indigne Catherine Gaigne. La direction rétorque que les négociations ont eu lieu dans le calme dans toutes les autres régions, parvenant parfois à des accords, et que tous les postes en magasins seront préservés.

Pour Stéphane Renaud, délégué syndical de Force ouvrière en province, le malaise des salariés de la FNAC n'est pourtant pas que parisien. Selon lui, Paris a simplement *"toujours eu un train d'avance dans la contestation parce qu'il est beaucoup plus facile pour les syndicats de se [coordonner](#) entre magasins proches et de se [rendre](#) au siège"*.

## UNE ÉVOLUTION DU MÉTIER

Mais au-delà des revendications salariales, les employés déplorent surtout la détérioration des conditions de travail. Dans le magasin d'Annecy où il travaille, Stéphane Renaud constate une baisse discrète, mais constante, des effectifs. "Nous étions encore 100 il y a quatre ans, contre 80 aujourd'hui", indique le syndicaliste. Les salariés se disent en sous-effectifs constants, et doivent désormais être capable de gérer plusieurs postes à la fois.

*"Après la polyvalence, la polycompétence, on nous parle de polyactivité. Le salarié doit savoir gérer le rayon, le comptoir et les différents métiers. Avant, les libraires étaient spécialisés en sciences humaines ou en bande dessinée, alors qu'aujourd'hui, ils doivent savoir tout faire et renseigner sur plus de 110 000 références", constate Catherine Gaigne. "Les métiers historiques, qui faisaient la réputation de la FNAC, ont disparu. Aujourd'hui, on nous incite à vendre essentiellement des services, notamment les garanties sur les produits techniques", ajoute Stéphane Renaud.*

Et le métier n'a pas fini d'évoluer. Le nouveau plan stratégique FNAC 2015 prévoit l'ouverture de points de vente de proximité, notamment dans les gares et les aéroports, et surtout l'arrivée de nouveaux produits (édition abonnés) en magasins, notamment du petit électroménager dans les univers "maison et design".

Le PDG de la FNAC, Alexandre Bompard, inaugurerait justement jeudi soir le premier espace de ce genre dans le magasin de Rosny (Seine-Saint-Denis). Pile au même moment, les salariés en colère séquestreraient leur directeur, prêts à tout pour que les libraires FNAC ne soit pas obligés d'écouler des machines à café.

Pauline Pellissier

## La France est en plein déni de réalité, selon *The Economist*

Par [Guillaume Guichard](#) Publié le 30/03/2012 à 12:06 [Réactions](#) (28)

L'hebdomadaire britannique donne une leçon à la France: la campagne présidentielle est incroyablement «frivole» et ignore superbement les graves problèmes économiques du pays.

[Nicolas Sarkozy](#) et [François Hollande](#) conversent dans un parc, assis à l'ombre des arbres



et accompagnés d'une jeune femme nue. La Une du magazine *The Economist* de cette semaine, qui détourne le «Déjeuner sur l'herbe» de Manet, est accompagnée de ce titre: «La France dans le déni» (de réalité). Si le lecteur n'avait pas compris, un sous-titre enfonce le clou: «La campagne la plus frivole des pays occidentaux».

La très élitiste revue britannique ne mâche pas ses mots. Elle avait fait sa Une sur Berlusconi il y a quelques mois en le présentant comme «L'homme qui baise l'Italie». Et s'attaque aujourd'hui à la présidentielle française. «Le pays fait face à un choc économique imminent, et les candidats l'ignorent superbement», écrit-il. Dette publique et compétitivité: ce sont les deux défis considérables, selon l'hebdomadaire, auxquels la France doit faire face.

«Aucun des candidats n'a de programme sérieux pour réduire les hallucinants niveaux de taxation», commence le journal dans son édito. [Ils ne proposent rien](#) pour que le pays réduise [ses dettes](#) et regagne en compétitivité, détaille-t-il ensuite dans un dossier de trois pages. Or, «une France léthargique et immobile pourrait bien se retrouver au centre de la prochaine crise de la zone euro», prévient-il. Le pays aux 350 fromages s'isole dans son déni, alors que le reste de l'Europe mène des réformes tambour battant, le journal citant l'exemple de l'Italie ou de l'Espagne.

### Hollande choque *The Economist*

L'hebdomadaire libéral s'étrangle à l'idée avancée par le candidat socialiste François Hollande de [taxer à 75%](#) la dernière tranche des revenus des plus aisés. Il dénonce «l'hostilité» des socialistes français «à l'égard de l'entrepreneuriat et de la création de richesse», ce qui reflète leur incapacité à reconnaître que le monde a changé depuis 1981. Nicolas Sarkozy n'est pas épargné. *The Economist* regrette que le président en exercice ait arrêté de parler de ses réformes [«à l'allemande»](#) mentionnée en début de campagne.

Seul [François Bayrou](#), «qui descend tous les cinq ans de son tracteur pour faire campagne», trouve grâce aux yeux de l'hebdomadaire car il veut réduire de 50 milliards d'euros les dépenses de l'État. Mais les Français n'en n'ont cure et les sondages placent Bayrou au même niveau que [Jean-Luc Mélenchon](#), «ancien trotskiste et ex-sénateur socialiste soutenu par le Parti communiste».

## **Double discours**

Le seul point rassurant pour *The Economist* n'est pas à l'honneur des deux principaux candidats: ces derniers tiennent un «double discours», ils ne croient pas à ce qu'ils proposent, estime-t-il. «Aux électeurs de faire le tri dans les programmes des candidats entre les propositions crédibles et celles relevant de la pure fantaisie», observe, dépité, l'hebdomadaire.

«La triste vérité, conclut le journal, est celle-ci: quel que soit le vainqueur, il sera forcé de prendre de dures mesures pour lutter contre le déficit, sur fond de marchés inquiets et de craintes de récession. Une telle politique sera un choc pour les Français et aucun des candidats ne les a préparés à cela.»

## France Suggests Deal Is Near on Tapping Oil Reserve

By [DAVID JOLLY](#)

PARIS — [François Fillon](#), the French prime minister, suggested Thursday that a deal was near among developed countries, including the United States, to tap strategic petroleum reserves to reduce gasoline prices.

There are “good prospects” for a deal, Mr. Fillon told [France](#) Inter radio, adding his voice to those of other French officials who have said in recent days that the idea, which they attributed to the Obama administration, was under discussion among countries including the United States, Britain and Japan.

“If we reach an accord with the other developed countries, we’ll draw on our stocks, push down the price for a limited time,” Mr. Fillon said. “It’s a way to face a crisis that is largely due to the situation today in Iran. But we shouldn’t expect any miracles. It could allow us to stabilize the price, reorient it a little lower.”

The price of U.S. crude oil futures for May delivery fell nearly 2 percent Thursday.

Domestic political concerns on both sides of the Atlantic may be a factor in the current discussions. President [Barack Obama](#) faces a re-election in November, with gasoline prices at \$4 a gallon or more in some states.

His French counterpart, President [Nicolas Sarkozy](#), may be feeling even greater pressure to act, with gasoline prices in the Paris area at more than €2 a liter, or \$10 a gallon, and a first-round election test less than one month away.

Nations build oil stockpiles, like the [Strategic Petroleum Reserve in the United States](#), to insure against major shocks to supply, like those caused by wars or natural disasters. Last June, the United States and its allies [agreed to release 60 million barrels](#) of emergency oil reserves to replace lost Libyan production, helping to soften a spike in prices.

Oil prices have risen for a number of reasons, including sanctions against Iran in the standoff over its nuclear ambitions, reduced exports from Syria, Yemen and South Sudan, and demand from India and China. Central banks’ [quantitative easing](#) policies, which leave more dollars, yen and euros chasing a finite quantity of the commodity, may also be contributing to the rise in prices.

Ali al-Naimi, the oil minister of Saudi Arabia, the largest oil producer in the world, said Wednesday in an opinion piece in The Financial Times that the kingdom would also do its utmost to hold prices down so as not to derail the global economic recovery.

“The use of strategic stocks is supposed to be the last bullet,” Olivier Jakob, an oil analyst at Petromatrix in Zug, Switzerland, wrote in a report Thursday. “If Western powers are seriously envisaging this, then it only shows the lack of commitment they have received from Saudi Arabia to replace the Iranian oil that is falling under the embargo.”

“Looking at the way Europe has managed the Greek crisis,” he added, “we should now expect a sound bite about stock releases every day.”

Mr. Fillon’s remarks followed similar comments from other French officials. Valérie Pécresse, the budget minister, sought Wednesday to temper expectations of immediate action, saying the government was



waiting to see fresh data on the oil market from the International Energy Agency, the Paris-based body that analyzes oil market conditions.

The I.E.A.'s executive director, Maria van der Hoeven, said last week that any move to tap reserves — something normally coordinated by the I.E.A. — would be up the countries involved. But in an apparent softening of the I.E.A.'s position, she said in a statement Thursday that the agency was concerned by the impact of high oil prices while the global economic recovery remained fragile.

“The I.E.A. is closely monitoring market developments and will remain in close contact with member countries to exchange views about the oil market situation,” she said. “As we have mentioned many times, the I.E.A. was created to respond to serious physical supply disruptions, and we remain ready to act if market conditions so warrant.”

An Obama administration official said Wednesday that no decision had been made about how to proceed. “While this is an option that remains on the table, no decisions have been made and no specific actions have been proposed,” Josh Earnest, the deputy White House press secretary, said at a briefing in Washington, Bloomberg News reported.

NYT March 29, 2012

## Euro Zone's Next Debate: How Big of a Bailout Fund?

By [JAMES KANTER](#)

COPENHAGEN — How big is big enough for a permanent bailout fund for the euro zone?

When finance ministers meet here Friday and Saturday, they will seek to agree on a figure large enough to deter speculators from further driving up the borrowing costs of countries like Spain, but not so large as to risk the creditworthiness of countries like Germany.

The wrangling over the size of the fund, which would act as a firewall to protect the euro zone if another country faltered, is the latest challenge the currency union faces as it seeks to overcome a crisis of confidence that was set off two years ago by Greece's severe indebtedness.

One of the plans the ministers could agree to would resemble a suggestion by Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany early in the week: letting a temporary fund called the European Financial Stability Facility, or E.F.S.F., which has aided Greece, Ireland and Portugal, continue to operate beside a new, permanent fund, the European Stability Mechanism, or E.S.M. That would bring the total lending capacity of the firewall to nearly 700 billion euros, or \$934 billion.

And by allowing the facility to make new loans until mid-2013, the ministers would make an additional 240 billion euros available — but temporarily.

Such loans would be made only “in exceptional circumstances following a unanimous decision of euro area heads of state or government notably in case the E.S.M. capacity would prove insufficient,” according to a copy of a draft statement from euro zone finance ministers that was circulating Thursday.

In the absence of any new lending, “the combined lending ceiling of the E.S.M. and the E.F.S.F. will thus be set at 700 billion euros for the period after mid-2013,” the statement said.

Ministers also could agree to capitalize the permanent fund more quickly than previously planned by making the final installment of five payments of 16 billion euros each in the first half of 2014. Each 16 billion euro installment is leveraged to create lending capacity of about 100 billion euros, bringing total firepower to 500 billion euros.

The draft could change during the gathering, which will include the governors of the central banks of all European Union member states.

Views differ sharply across Europe, and the world, on how to build the most effective firewall.

So-called maximalists like Ángel Gurría, secretary general of the [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development](#), based in Paris, have repeatedly called for a fund of about 1 trillion euros. Mr. Gurría said this week that the “mother of all firewalls” was necessary to prevent another crisis in Europe.

A firewall amounting to 1 trillion euros would be an effective “nuclear” deterrent against speculative threats to the euro zone, François Baroin, the French finance minister, told BFM Business television Thursday.

A commitment by Europe to put more of its own resources at stake could also nudge donors to the International Monetary Fund, including the United States and China, to pledge more to the fund. That

would give the fund, which has taken part in the three euro zone bailouts, more resources to help bail out other European countries, if necessary.

But the maximalist approach has inflamed some European leaders, who say putting up so much money could encourage some countries to reduce their commitments to austerity and could put at even greater risk the taxpayers in Germany and elsewhere who would bear the bailout funds' liabilities.

In an apparent swipe at Mr. Gurría's suggestion of a 1 trillion euro fund, Steffen Siebert, the German government spokesman, said Wednesday that it was "regrettable that in these discussions obviously no figure is high enough." Such suggestions are counterproductive, Mr. Siebert said, as "they further unsettle the markets."

Speaking late on Thursday in Copenhagen, Wolfgang Schäuble, the German finance minister, suggested that any sum agreed to by ministers on Friday would not be more than 800 billion euros.

The future leadership of the euro zone is another topic likely to be discussed at the meeting, but probably on the margins.

The current leader of the so-called Eurogroup of euro zone finance ministers is Jean-Claude Juncker of Luxembourg. His term will end in June, and speculation is widespread that his successor could be Mr. Schäuble.

But such an appointment also could make it more difficult to keep another German, Klaus Regling, at the head of the stability facility.

03/29/2012 04:26 PM

**SPIEGEL ONLINE**

## The Burial Brigade of Homs

# An Executioner for Syria's Rebels Tells His Story

By [Ulrike Putz](#) in Beirut

Human Rights Watch has condemned abuses committed by Syrian rebels in their stronghold of Homs. But one member of a rebel "burial brigade" who has executed four men by slitting their throats defended his work in an interview with SPIEGEL ONLINE. "If we don't do it, nobody will hold these perpetrators to account," he said.

Hussein can barely remember the first time he executed someone. It was probably in a cemetery in the evening, or at night; he can't recall exactly. It was definitely mid-October of last year, and the man was Shiite, for sure. He had confessed to killing women -- decent women, whose husbands and sons had protested against Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime. So the rebels had decided that the man, a soldier in the Syrian army, deserved to die, too.

Hussein didn't care if the man had been beaten into a confession, or that he was terrified of death and had begun to stammer prayers. It was his tough luck that the rebels had caught him. Hussein took out his army knife and sliced the kneeling man's neck. His comrades from the so-called "burial brigade" quickly interred the blood-stained corpse in the sand of the graveyard west of the Baba Amr area of the rebel stronghold of Homs. At the time, the neighborhood was in the hands of the insurgents.

That first execution was a rite of passage for Hussein. He now became a member of the Homs burial brigade. The men, of which there are only a handful, kill in the name of the Syrian revolution. They leave torture to others; that's what the so-called interrogation brigade is for. "They do the ugly work," says Hussein, who is currently being treated in a hospital in the Lebanese city of Tripoli. He was injured when a piece of shrapnel became lodged in his back during the army's ground invasion of Baba Amr in early March.

He is recovering in relatively safe Lebanon until he can return to Syria and "get back to work." It's a job he considers relatively clean. "Most men can torture, but they're not able to kill from close range," he explains. "I don't know why, but it doesn't bother me. That's why they gave me the job of executioner. It's something for a madman like me."

Before he joined the Farouk Brigade, as the Baba Amr militia is known, last August, the 24-year-old had worked as a salesman. "I can sell everything, from porcelain to yogurt," he says.

### How the Rebels Lost Their Innocence

The bloody uprising against the Assad regime has now lasted for a year. And Hussein's story illustrates that, in this time, the rebels have also lost their innocence.

There are probably many reasons for that development. Hussein can rattle off several of them. "There are no longer any laws in Syria," he says. "Soldiers or thugs hired by the regime kill men, maim children and rape our women. If we don't do it, nobody will hold these perpetrators to account."

Another reason, he explains, is the desire for vengeance. "I have been arrested twice. I was tortured for 72 hours. They hung me by the hands, until the joints in my shoulders cracked. They burnt me with hot irons. Of course I want revenge."

His family, too, has suffered. He explains that he lost three uncles, all murdered by the regime. "One of them died with his five children," he says. "Their murderers deserve no mercy."

Most chillingly, Hussein believes that violence is simply in the nature of his society. "Children in France grow up with French, and learn to speak it perfectly," he says. "We Syrians were brought up with the language of violence. We don't speak anything else."

But in spite of all the rebels' justification for their brand of self-administered justice, Hussein's actions fall under what the non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch on Tuesday condemned as "serious human rights abuses" on the part of the Syrian rebels. In the corridors of the hospital in Tripoli, Hussein and his fellow injured comrades speak openly about the fact that they, just like the regime's troops, torture and kill. They find the criticism from the human rights activists unfair: "We rebels are trying to defend the people. We're fighting against slaughterers. When we catch them, we must strike hard," says one fighter, who goes by the nom de guerre Abu Rami.

### **Alternative Justice System**

Over the course of the last year, Homs had developed into the unofficial capital of the revolution. Until a few weeks ago, the rebels controlled whole neighborhoods of the city, especially the district of Baba Amr. But that area was overrun by government troops in early March. The fight between rebels and government forces has now shifted to the neighboring district of Khalidiya.

According to Abu Rami and Hussein, the alternative justice system that the rebels set up in Homs last fall remains intact. "When we catch regime supporters, they are brought before a court martial," they say. The commander of the rebels in Homs, Abu Mohammed, presides over the court. He is assisted by Abu Hussein, the head of the coordinating committee. "Sometimes even more men act as a jury," says Hussein. The interrogation brigade reports on the confessions of the accused. Often the suspects even had videos on their cell phones that showed atrocities being perpetrated against insurgents, the men say. "In that situation, their guilt is established quickly." In the event of a conviction, the prisoners are then handed over to Hussein's burial brigade, which takes them to gardens or to the cemetery. And then Hussein comes along with his knife.

So far, Hussein has cut the throats of four men. Among the group of executioners in Homs, he is the least experienced -- something that he almost seems apologetic about. "I was wounded four times in the last seven months," he says. "I was out of action for a long time." On top of that, he also has other commitments. "I operate our heavy machine gun, a Russian BKC. Naturally I have killed a lot more men with that. But only four with the blade." That will change soon, he says. "I hope I will be released from the hospital next week and can return to Homs. Then those dogs will be in for it."

### **'Sometimes We Acquit People'**

The rebels in Homs began carrying out regular executions in August of last year, shortly after the conflict in the country began to escalate, says Hussein's comrade Abu Rami. In his Adidas tracksuit, he looks like any other convalescent in the hospital. But Abu Rami is a senior member of the Homs militia. The other Syrians in the ward greet him respectfully and pay close attention to his words.

"Since last summer, we have executed slightly fewer than 150 men, which represents about 20 percent of our prisoners," says Abu Rami. Those prisoners who are not convicted and sentenced to death are exchanged for rebel prisoners or detained protesters, he says. But the executioners of Homs have been busier with traitors within their own ranks than with prisoners of war. "If we catch a Sunni spying, or if a

citizen betrays the revolution, we make it quick," says the fighter. According to Abu Rami, Hussein's burial brigade has put between 200 and 250 traitors to death since the beginning of the uprising.

He dismisses any doubts about whether these people were really all guilty and whether they received a fair trial. "We make great efforts to investigate thoroughly," Abu Rami says. "Sometimes we acquit people, too."

Apart from anything else, it is simply the nature of every revolution to be bloody, Abu Rami explains. "Syria is not a country for the sensitive."

*URL:*

- <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,824603,00.html>

## France : la dette culmine à 1717,3 milliards d'euros

Par [Guillaume Guichard](#) Mis à jour le 30/03/2012 à 10:58 | publié le 30/03/2012 à 09:22 [Réactions](#) (51)

**La dette de l'État représentait 85,8% de la richesse nationale au 31 décembre dernier, selon l'Insee. À 5,2%, le déficit public, c'est-à-dire la différence entre recettes et dépenses, se replie par rapport à 2010.**

Question finances publiques, la France s'est montrée meilleure que prévu en 2011. Le gouvernement a réussi à réduire le [déficit public](#), c'est-à-dire la différence entre ses recettes et ses dépenses, à 5,2% du produit intérieur brut (PIB), contre un déficit de 7,1% en 2010. En chiffres bruts, l'État a toutefois dépensé sur l'année 103,1 milliards d'euros de plus que ce qu'il a gagné.

«En 2011, la France s'était engagée à réduire son déficit pour être à 5,7% (du PIB). La France a fait beaucoup mieux grâce aux efforts des Français, puisque nous serons à 5,2», s'est félicité le président Nicolas Sarkozy ce vendredi matin sur Europe 1. «C'est une excellente nouvelle», a réagi pour sa part le ministre de l'Économie François Baroin.

### Des recettes dynamiques

«Pour la troisième année consécutive, le déficit s'affiche de façon significative sous l'objectif initial, note Dominique Barbet, économiste marché à BNP Paribas CIB. Cela devrait aider le prochain gouvernement à respecter, voire à améliorer, l'objectif de déficit pour 2012 (4,5% du PIB) puis à atteindre celui de 2013 (3%).»

Ce bon résultat s'explique en partie par le dynamisme des recettes (impôts, taxes, etc.). En augmentant de 5,9%, ces dernières sont passées de 49,5% du PIB en 2010 à 50,7% en 2011. En conséquence, «le taux de prélèvements obligatoires augmente de 1,3 point en 2011, à 43,8% du PIB, sous l'effet de la hausse des impôts (+7,8%)», précise l'Insee. Dans le détail, les recettes liées aux impôts sur le revenu et sur le patrimoine ont augmenté de 10%.

### Baisse relative des dépenses

Les dépenses ont pour leur part baissé relativement à la richesse nationale, représentant 56,6% du PIB en 2010 et 55,9 % en 2011. Dans l'absolu, elles croissent de 2,1%, après 2,3% en 2010. «Les dépenses de fonctionnement ralentissent particulièrement», relève l'Insee. Les rémunérations des fonctionnaires ont augmenté moins rapidement que l'année passée (+1,6% après +2,1%). Les consommations intermédiaires ont même diminué de 1,5% grâce à l'absence de livraisons de matériel militaire.

Les intérêts de la dette ont pour leur part fortement augmenté, de 9,5% sur l'année. En cause, la hausse de la dette, mais aussi celle de l'inflation. Une partie des emprunts étant indexée sur la progression des prix, cela a provoqué une augmentation des intérêts à verser aux créanciers.

### Record pour la dette

La dette, qui est alimentée par l'accumulation des déficits années après années, a continué de grimper en 2011, pour atteindre 1717,3 milliards d'euros, soit 85,8% du PIB. Elle est en hausse de 122,1 milliards d'euros par rapport à l'année précédente (en 2010, elle avait gonflé de 101,7 milliards d'euros). Les prêts accordés aux pays en difficulté de la zone euro (Grèce, Portugal, Irlande) ont alimenté la dette à hauteur de 10,4 milliards d'euros.

## France's future

### A country in denial

**By ignoring their country's economic problems, France's politicians are making it far harder to tackle them**



The Economist Leader Mar 31st 2012

VISIT the euro zone and you will be invigorated by gusts of reform. The “Save Italy” plan has done enough for Mario Monti, the prime minister, to declare, however prematurely, that the euro crisis is nearly over. In Spain Mariano Rajoy’s government has tackled the job market and is about to unveil a tight budget (see [article](#)). For all their troubles, Greeks know that the free-spending and tax-dodging are over. But one country has yet to face up to its changed circumstances.

France is entering the final three weeks of its presidential campaign. The ranking of the first round, on April 22nd, remains highly uncertain, but the polls back François Hollande, the Socialist challenger, to win a second-round victory. Indeed, in elections since the euro crisis broke, almost all governments in the euro zone have been tossed out by voters. But Nicolas Sarkozy, the Gaullist president, has been clawing back ground. The recent terrorist atrocity in Toulouse has put new emphasis on security and Islamism, issues that tend to favour the right—or, in the shape of Marine Le Pen, the far right.

Yet what is most striking about the French election is how little anybody is saying about the country’s dire economic straits (see [article](#)). The candidates dish out at least as many promises to spend more as to spend less. Nobody has a serious agenda for reducing France’s eye-watering taxes. Mr Sarkozy, who in 2007 promised reform with talk of a *rupture*, now offers voters protectionism, attacks on French tax exiles, threats to quit Europe’s passport-free Schengen zone and (at least before Toulouse) talk of the evils of immigration and halal meat. Mr Hollande promises to expand the state, creating 60,000 teaching posts, partially roll back Mr Sarkozy’s rise in the pension age from 60 to 62, and squeeze the rich (whom he once cheerfully said he did not like), with a 75% top income-tax rate.

### A plethora of problems

France’s defenders point out that the country is hardly one of the euro zone’s Mediterranean basket cases. Unlike those economies, it should avoid recession this year. Although one ratings agency has stripped France of its AAA status, its borrowing costs remain far below Italy’s and Spain’s (though the spread above Germany’s has risen). France has enviable economic strengths: an educated and productive workforce, more big firms in the global *Fortune* 500 than any other European country, and strength in services and high-end manufacturing.



However, the fundamentals are much grimmer. France has not balanced its books since 1974. Public debt stands at 90% of GDP and rising. Public spending, at 56% of GDP, gobbles up a bigger chunk of output than in any other euro-zone country—more even than in Sweden. The banks are undercapitalised. Unemployment is higher than at any time since the late 1990s and has not fallen below 7% in nearly 30 years, creating chronic joblessness in the crime-ridden *banlieues* that ring France's big cities. Exports are stagnating while they roar ahead in Germany. France now has the euro zone's largest current-account deficit in nominal terms. Perhaps France could live on credit before the financial crisis, when borrowing was easy. Not any more. Indeed, a sluggish and unreformed France might even find itself at the centre of the next euro crisis.

It is not unusual for politicians to avoid some ugly truths during elections; but it is unusual, in recent times in Europe, to ignore them as completely as French politicians are doing. In Britain, Ireland, Portugal and Spain voters have plumped for parties that promised painful realism. Part of the problem is that French voters are notorious for their belief in the state's benevolence and the market's heartless cruelty. Almost uniquely among developed countries, French voters tend to see globalisation as a blind threat rather than a source of prosperity. With the far left and the far right preaching protectionism, any candidate will feel he must shore up his base.

Many business leaders cling to the hope that a certain worldly realism will emerge. The debate will tack back to the centre when Mr Sarkozy and Mr Hollande square off in the second round; and once elected, the new president will ditch his extravagant promises and pursue a sensible agenda of reform, like other European governments. But is that really possible? It would be hard for Mr Sarkozy suddenly to propose deep public-spending cuts, given all the things he has said. It would be harder still for Mr Hollande to drop his 75% tax rate.

### **1981 and all that**

Besides, there is a more worrying possibility than insincerity. The candidates may actually mean what they say. And with Mr Hollande, who after all is still the most likely victor, that could have dramatic consequences.

The last time an untried Socialist candidate became president was in 1981. As a protégé of François Mitterrand, Mr Hollande will remember how things turned out for his mentor. Having nationalised swathes of industry and subjected the country to two devaluations and months of punishment by the markets, Mitterrand was forced into reverse.

Mr Hollande's defenders say he is a pragmatist with a more moderate programme than Mitterrand's. His pension-age rollback applies only to a small set of workers; his 75% tax rate affects a tiny minority. Yet such policies indicate hostility to entrepreneurship and wealth creation and reflect the French Socialist Party's failure to recognise that the world has changed since 1981, when capital controls were in place, the European single market was incomplete, young workers were less mobile and there was no single currency. Nor were France's European rivals pursuing big reforms with today's vigour.

If Mr Hollande wins in May (and his party wins again at legislative elections in June), he may find he has weeks, not years, before investors start to flee France's bond market. The numbers of well-off and young French people who hop across to Britain (and its 45% top income tax) could quickly increase.

Even if Mr Sarkozy is re-elected, the risks will not disappear. He may not propose anything as daft as a 75% tax, but neither is he offering the radical reforms or the structural downsizing of spending that France needs. France's picnickers are about to be swamped by harsh reality, no matter who is president.

## The French election

### An inconvenient truth

The French have had a security wake-up call. But when it comes to the dangers facing their economy, they are still dozing



The Economist Briefing Mar 31st 2012 | *PARIS* | from the print edition

A WEEK after France was shaken by terrorist shootings in and around Toulouse, candidates for the country's presidential election have gone back to the stump. The tone is a little less shrill, the contenders respectful of the sombre mood. Yet the return to electioneering has a surreal quality nonetheless, unlinked to the new concerns about security. For the country faces an imminent economic shock, which the presidential candidates are utterly failing to acknowledge.



The awkward truth is that France, the second-biggest economy in the euro zone after Germany, faces a public-finance squeeze. French public spending now accounts for 56% of GDP (see chart 1), compared with an OECD average of 43.3%: higher even than in Sweden. For years France has offered its people a Swedish-style social model of services, benefits and protection, but has failed to create enough wealth to pay for it.

Today France continues to behave as if it enjoyed Sweden's or Germany's public finances, when in truth they are closer to those of Spain. Although France and Germany have comparable public-debt levels, at over 80% of GDP, Germany's is now inching downwards whereas France's is at 90% and rising. One rating agency has already stripped France of its AAA credit rating over worries about high debt and low

growth. The country's auditor, the Cour des Comptes, chaired by Didier Migaud, a former Socialist deputy, has warned that unless "difficult decisions" are taken this year and next on spending, public debt could reach 100% by 2015 or 2016.



The underlying problem is that, over the past ten years, France has lost competitiveness. In 2000 hourly labour costs in France were 8% lower than those in Germany, its main trading partner; today, they are 10% higher (see chart 2). French exports have stagnated while Germany's have boomed. An employer today pays twice as much in social charges in France as he does in Germany. France's unemployment rate is 10% next to 5.8% in Germany—and has not dipped below 7% for nearly 30 years.

This erosion of French competitiveness raises hard questions about the underlying social compact. Frenchmen cherish the notion that everyone has an equal right to decent services in good times and a generous safety net in bad. But what sort of level of support, in sickness, joblessness, infancy or old age, can France really afford to offer its citizens? How can the country justify its massive public administration—a *millefeuille* of communes, departments, regions and the central state—which employs 90 civil servants per 1,000 population, compared with 50 in Germany? How can France lighten the tax burden, including payroll social charges, so as to encourage entrepreneurship and job creation?

Put simply, France is about to face the tough choices that Gerhard Schröder, Germany's former chancellor, confronted in the early 2000s or that Sweden did in the mid-1990s, when its own unsustainable social system collapsed. The euro-zone crisis, which has made bond markets unsparing of slack economic management, means that these decisions have become both more urgent and more difficult. Whoever is elected at France's two-round presidential election on April 22nd and May 6th will face a choice. If he fails to be tough enough on the deficit, markets will react badly, and France could find itself at the centre of a new euro-zone financing crisis. If he tackles the deficit with tax increases across the board and even spending cuts, voters will not be remotely prepared for it.

"The real risk for the euro zone now is not Greece, but France," says a top French finance boss. Nicolas Baverez, a commentator who foresaw the country's looming debt problems in a bestselling book of 2003, agrees: "I'm convinced that France will be the centre of the next shock in the euro zone."

The candidates, however, are masterfully managing to duck all this. Before the Toulouse shootings intervened, the campaign turned around such pressing matters as halal slaughterhouses, immigration and tax exiles. Although both Nicolas Sarkozy, the Gaullist incumbent, and François Hollande, his Socialist rival, have embraced deficit reduction, each vowing to bring France's budget deficit down to 3% of GDP next year, neither is promising to do so by making radical spending cuts.

Both presidential front-runners instead rely heavily on balancing the books through tax increases. Mr Sarkozy has already raised corporate and income tax. He now says he wants to tax even those who leave France for tax reasons. Mr Hollande promises a 75% top income-tax rate on those earning over €1m (\$1.3m) a year, which means they would pay over 90% after social charges. He also wants to increase the annual wealth tax, levied annually on assets worth over €1.3m, and tax dividends more. He vows to raise

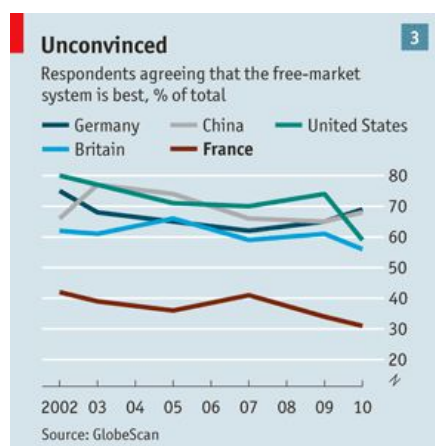
the minimum wage, create 60,000 teaching jobs, lower the minimum retirement age to 60 for those who began work young, and “renegotiate” the European fiscal compact, a hard-won deal that seeks to guarantee budgetary discipline.

How can France be holding an election that so signally fails to confront the right questions? What are the chances that any of the candidates, if elected, is ready to face up to the shock that is to come?

## A parallel universe

Last summer Jean-Pascal Tricoire, the chief executive of Schneider Electric, a French energy-services company founded in Burgundy in 1836, packed up and moved to Hong Kong to run the company from Asia. He took two top executives with him; others followed. They join a new French exodus to Hong Kong, particularly among entrepreneurs. Schneider Electric’s official headquarters, and tax domicile, remains in France. But with only 8% of annual turnover in France these days, the firm’s eyes are on the rest of the world.

Spend time with the chiefs of France’s foremost companies and, like Schneider Electric, their concerns are global. They talk about Brazil and China, and are constantly watching their international competitiveness. With more Fortune 500 companies than any other European country, France has a global leader in almost every sector from insurance (AXA) to cosmetics (L’Oréal). These firms know full well how damaging a 75% tax rate, for instance, would be. “A catastrophe,” says one boss. “Completely mad,” says another.



Yet ordinary French folk seem almost uniquely hostile to these very companies, and to the globalised markets that have helped to make their economy the fifth-largest in the world. Only 31% of the French agree that the free-market economy is the best system available, according to a poll by Globescan, a polling firm (see chart 3); across ten years of polling, the French have consistently been among the most distrustful of capitalism. This is the France that voted “no” in 2005 to the draft European Union constitution, amid fears about Polish plumbers flooding into France under single-market rules. And this is the France that made a book calling for “deglobalisation” a bestseller last year.

The French live with this national contradiction—enjoying the wealth and jobs that global companies have brought, while denouncing the system that created them—because the governing elite and the media convince them that they are victims of global markets. Trade unionists get far more air-time than businessmen. The French have consistently been told that they are the largely innocent victims of reckless bankers who lent foolishly, or wanton financial speculators, or “Anglo-Saxon” credit-ratings agencies. Mr Sarkozy has called for capitalism to become “moral” so as to curb such abuse. Mr Hollande has declared that his “main opponent is the world of finance”. Few politicians care to point out that a big part of the problem is the debt that successive French governments themselves have built up over the decades. Why?

The explanation is part conviction, part calculation. Neither the French right nor the left has ever fully embraced market-friendly thinking, except under duress. Despite the occasional liberal impulse, Mr Sarkozy is part of the Gaullist family, which largely rejects such a doctrine. Most of today's Socialist leaders cut their political teeth working for François Mitterrand (Mr Hollande was on his presidential staff); the party still worries far more about redistribution than wealth creation. "The soul of France", declared Mr Hollande when launching his campaign, "is equality." Liberal candidates in France tend to get nowhere. Ten years ago the most recent such presidential hopeful, Alain Madelin, got just 3.9% of the vote.

### **Dangerous talk**

So it is with today's election. Rather than confronting these attitudes, and shaking the French out of their comfort zone, the two front-runners are pandering to popular reflexes. At a giant rally in Villepinte, north of Paris, Mr Sarkozy laid into EU trade rules, which he said had unleashed "savage" competition; called for a "Buy European Act" for public procurement if non-European trading partners did not open up their markets; and threatened to pull the country out of the Schengen passport-free zone, unless fellow members did more to control immigration from outside the area. Apparently without irony, the son of a Hungarian immigrant started to tread on nasty ground, with talk of "too many foreigners" in France. All this is meant to reassure fretful French voters, who think Europe is failing to protect them from global competition.

Certainly Mr Sarkozy can point to some useful liberalising reforms on his watch, such as a rise in the minimum retirement age from 60 to 62, or the granting of autonomy to universities. He also pointed to the crushing weight of French social charges on employers, which deter job creation and which he has trimmed a bit. But the politician who once wrote disapprovingly that France "has never stopped discouraging initiative and punishing success" has now raised taxes on the rich, and bashes big bosses and bankers at every turn.

All this is also tactical. In the first round of voting in France (as in America's primaries), candidates try to shore up their base; in the run-off, they compete for the centre. On the far right Mr Sarkozy has to confront Marine Le Pen, the telegenic National Front candidate. Present polls put her in distant third or even fourth place, with 16%-18% of the first-round vote, compared with 28% or so each for Mr Sarkozy and Mr Hollande. But nobody has forgotten that her father, Jean-Marie, snatched a place in the second round in 2002 at the Socialists' expense. The feisty Ms Le Pen, who has rid the party of its jack-booted image, is unlikely to repeat that feat. Her strong campaign nevertheless frames much of the election debate, with calls to leave the euro, reindustrialise the country and curb Islamification.

Mr Hollande faces a similar squeeze on the left. With a reputation as a moderate, who promises to introduce his own balanced-budget law, he has been struggling to keep the hard left at bay in the person of Jean-Luc Mélenchon, a one-time Trotskyite and former Socialist senator now backed by the Communist party. At a recent rally held, with theatrical symbolism, at the Bastille, Mr Mélenchon called for a "civic insurrection" against the "ancien régime". He wants full pensions for all at 60, a 20% hike in the minimum wage and a cap on all salaries at €360,000 a year. With his tub-thumping style and gruff manner, Mr Mélenchon's campaign has been a sensation. More than one in ten French people say they will vote for him.

Although most of this electorate would then swing behind Mr Hollande in the second round, Mr Mélenchon's recent poll surge has been nibbling away at Mr Hollande's numbers, depriving him of the momentum that might carry him to victory. Hence his plans for a new tax on financial transactions, the abolition of stock options and the 75% tax rate. Hence too his stinging attacks on finance and wealth, and denunciation of the new super-rich as "grasping and arrogant".

### **Opération décryptage**

Many French commentators dismiss all this as mere political posturing. Aides to both front-runners argue that, in reality, each understands what is at stake. The 75% tax rate, says Olivier Ferrand, head of Terra Nova, a Socialist-linked think-tank, is “just a symbolic measure”: even Mr Hollande has conceded that it will bring in little revenue, if any. Behind all the rhetoric, Mr Ferrand insists, “the Socialist Party has modernised, and does understand the need to improve competitiveness and control the deficit.”

Mr Hollande, a jovial character in private, rejects the idea that he is dangerous, stating as much—in English—as he arrived in London in February. He has put in charge of his campaign two men, Pierre Moscovici and Manuel Valls, who were once close to the moderate Dominique Strauss-Kahn, ex-boss of the IMF, who has been ruled out of the race by a sex scandal. Once in power, French Socialists can end up doing sound things. With Mr Strauss-Kahn as his finance minister, Lionel Jospin, the Socialist prime minister in 1997-2002, privatised more French companies than all his predecessors put together. “We liberalised the economy, and opened up the markets to finance and privatisation,” recalled Mr Hollande before heading to London.



The obliviousness of spring

Yet it requires much forbearance on the part of the electorate to accept that the candidate will not do half the things he has said he will. There is a serious risk of disappointment if, for example, President Hollande were to say upon taking office: “We have examined the public accounts and, *quel dommage*, there is no money for anything I promised after all.” And in order to defuse this risk the new president would have to put into place at least some of his dafter ideas, if only as a political gesture. The last such measure the Socialists introduced was the 35-hour working week.

Decoding Mr Sarkozy is no easier. He has now eased off on some of his more unpleasant rhetoric, but plenty more is merely disingenuous. There is already, for instance, a Schengen review under way that would allow members to suspend free movement in certain circumstances. His idea of an American-style tax on the French abroad, but only on those who have left to avoid such taxes, would be all but impossible to apply. Perhaps he knows as much, and would do none of it. Indeed, Mr Sarkozy’s friends claim that he would turn out to be a reformist president if re-elected. “Sarkozy started to campaign by calling for German-style reforms,” says one adviser. “But he realised he had no chance of winning with that, because it’s unpopular, so he has gone for rightist, populist measures instead.” In office, claims the same adviser, he would turn out to be a “very active, reformist president”.

Amid all this doublespeak, the one candidate who has consistently talked about the need for debt reduction and spending cuts is François Bayrou, a centrist. He is a perennial presidential contender, without much of a party behind him, who gets off his tractor on his Béarn farm every five years to run for office in Paris. Mr Bayrou is no liberal: he wants a “fair price” for farm produce, and proposes voting rights for unions on company boards. But he at least promises €50 billion in spending cuts (alongside €50 billion in tax increases, including a new top income-tax rate of 50%, up from 44% now). Dismissing Mr Hollande’s 75% tax rate as “crazy”, he deplors the level of political debate. “We are not asking any of

the questions on which France's future survival depends," says Mr Bayrou. "When a country doesn't tackle any of these questions, it runs the risk of catastrophe." For now, though, the voters do not seem to care for this message: Mr Bayrou's numbers are no better than Mr Mélenchon's, which have surged to 12-13%.

### **Promises to break**

All of which leaves voters with the unenviable task of deciphering which part of each candidate's message is credible, and which part pure fantasy. The best guess is that both front-runners, for their own political security, would need to put in place a couple of the barmier ideas. This could be damaging enough. In 2007, after equally tough talk about immigration, Mr Sarkozy went ahead and set up a ministry of national identity—only to abolish it later on, having caused much offence along the way. Were a President Hollande to implement his 75% tax rate—just when Britain has cut its top rate from 50% to 45%—it would send an untimely message abroad about the way France treats financial success, much as the 35-hour week tarnished the country's image for years. His overall tax policy would tell aspiring French entrepreneurs that they might be better off launching a good idea elsewhere.

The inconvenient truth is that whoever emerges the victor on May 6th will need to show a tough approach to the deficit, in the face of wary bond markets and possible recession. A President Sarkozy would need to find new budget savings, despite his promise to "protect" the French from austerity. A President Hollande would be forced to postpone or scrap some of his spending pledges, and would get a taste of German steeliness if he insisted on pushing Chancellor Angela Merkel on the subject of reviewing the fiscal compact. Either way, the result would be a shock for the French, and one that neither candidate has remotely prepared them for.

## NATO's Duty

Tragic mistakes all too often accompany combat operations, even when the military objectives are humanitarian. That is what seems to have happened in the Libyan farming village of Majer last August. Amid the confusion of a rebel advance and a retreat by Qaddafi loyalists, successive NATO bomb runs there killed at least 34 Libyan civilians, including women and small children, according to journalists, human rights organizations and United Nations investigators.

The refusal by NATO to fully investigate and disclose what happened in Majer and other places where there are credible claims of civilian casualties means that the alliance won't be able to learn from such tragedies. It has cast a pall on a campaign fought for the right reasons, one that likely saved tens of thousands of Libyans from Muammar el-Qaddafi's murderous wrath.

NATO planners made extraordinary efforts to minimize civilian casualties. Fighter jets relied exclusively on smart bombs, which are guided by laser or satellite, to pinpoint intended targets. Bombing guidelines excluded legitimate military sites if hitting them also endangered civilians. But smart bombs are no more accurate than the intelligence used to program them and pilots flying at high speeds can only avoid civilians they know about. Most of the targets struck in Libya were not pre-planned, but chosen in flight on the basis of imperfect information.

Implausibly, NATO insists it knows of no "confirmed" civilian casualties during its entire seven-month Libya bombing campaign. "Confirmed," as our colleague C. J. Chivers pointed out in Sunday's Times, means [confirmed by NATO](#), which has shown little interest in investigating credible independent claims of civilian fatalities, including a 27-page memo submitted by The Times last year [documenting nine separate attacks](#) where the evidence pointed to unintended victims.

NATO has also declined to cooperate, on jurisdictional grounds, with an expert international panel appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council, led by a distinguished Canadian judge, Philippe Kirsch. That is not an acceptable response — for Libyans or for NATO.

If NATO's military leaders continue to resist a public inquiry, in concert with the U.N. or by NATO itself, President Obama and other political leaders of the alliance should press them to change their minds.



## Baroin und die Rettungsfonds Wer mit der Bombe spielt

FAZ 29.03.2012 · Frankreichs Finanzminister Baroin verlangt, dass die Euro-Krisenfonds auf eine Billion Euro aufgestockt werden. Der Schutzschirm sei so ähnlich wie Atomwaffen; er sei gemacht, um nicht eingesetzt zu werden. Das ist mehr als zynisch und doppelt falsch.

Von [Holger Steltzner](#)

Man kann eine Verschärfung der Euro-Krise auch herbeireden. Der französische Finanzminister François Baroin verlangt plötzlich die Aufstockung der Euro-Krisenfonds auf eine Billion Euro. In Betrag und Begründung schließt er sich damit Forderungen der Wall-Street-Banken an. Der Franzose übernimmt sogar die Wortwahl seines amerikanischen Amtskollegen. Der Schutzschirm sei so ähnlich wie Atomwaffen im militärischen Bereich; er sei gemacht, um nicht eingesetzt zu werden. Das ist mehr als zynisch und doppelt falsch. Wie viele Tote gab es nach den Atombombenabwürfen über Japan? Die Krisenfonds sind zur Nutzung da.

## Der Kapitalmarkt wird umgangen

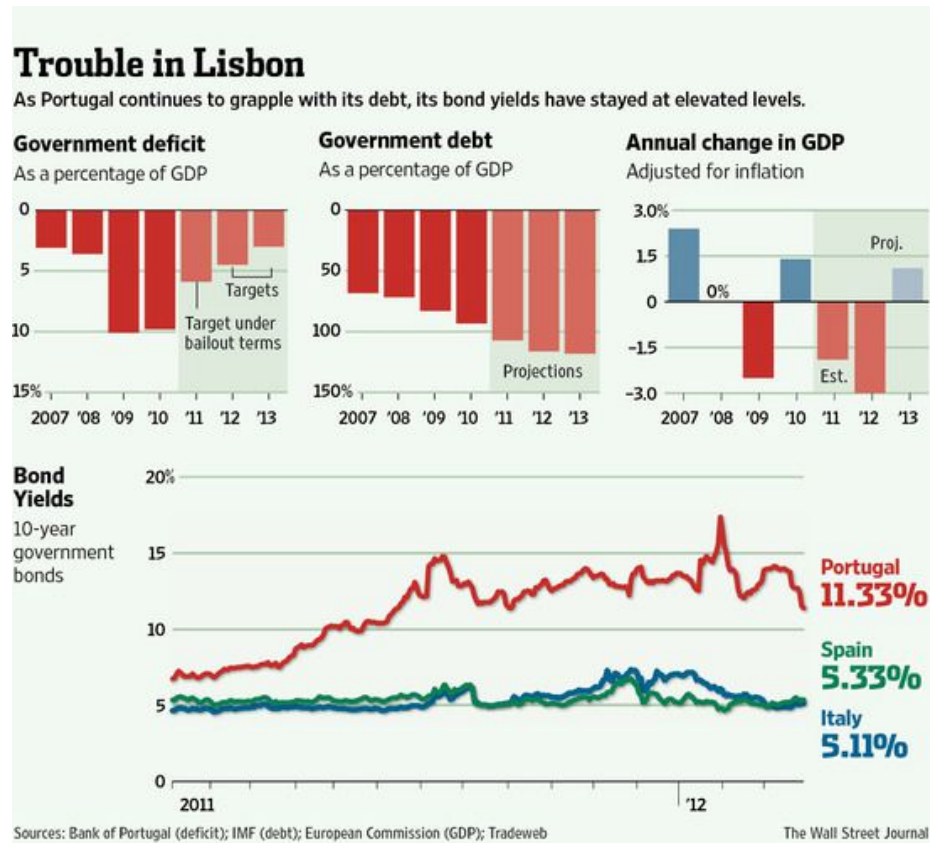
Der erste ist schon in Gebrauch und angeblich zu klein für Spanien und was noch kommen mag. Mit den Fonds wird der Kapitalmarkt umgangen und der Zins für Schuldensünder gedrückt. Wem will Baroin da weißmachen, die Billion nicht einsetzen zu wollen? Die Zustimmung zur Aufstockung auf etwa 700 Milliarden Euro war der Preis für den Fiskalpakt, den die Bundesregierung im Januar zahlen musste. Nun gibt die Nachforderung aus dem Pariser Wahlkampf einen Vorgeschmack auf das, was mit einem Wahlsieger François Hollande auf Berlin zukäme.

Quelle: F.A.Z.

## For Portugal, Moment of Truth Nears

By [CHARLES FORELLE](#) in London and [PATRICIA KOWSMANN](#) in Lisbon

Politicians in Lisbon and policy makers in Brussels insist that Portugal isn't like Greece. This spring, the country will have to prove it.



The European Central Bank's injection of money into the Continent's banking system has, for now, pulled Italy and Spain away from the edge of the sovereign-debt crisis. But that medicine hasn't soothed Portugal. Though its government-bond yields have improved this week, they remain at elevated levels that suggest distress.

In part that is because investors take a dim view of the government's struggle to close its budget gap amid a prolonged economic downturn. Portugal beat its 2011 deficit target of 5.9% of gross domestic product only after booking a gain from the transfer of pension assets from banks. It used a similar accounting maneuver in 2010, that time with telecom pension assets.

Portugal's banks also haven't stepped in heavily to buy government debt, an important ingredient of the revival in Spanish and Italian sentiment. Portugal is thus in a sort of public-finance purgatory. Its fiscal woes aren't Greek in stature, but nor has it delivered the steady improvements that fellow bailout recipient Ireland has.

Portugal's 10-year bond on Wednesday yielded above 11%, according to Tradeweb, down from 13.5% at the beginning of the year. Volume is thin and prices volatile. The comparable Irish bond yielded less than 7%.

"Even though the yield is very attractive, the risk return for holding that position is not," said Rebecca Patterson, chief markets strategist for J.P. Morgan Asset Management in New York. "There are plenty of places you can get return and not take a Greek-like risk."

The weak demand and low volumes suggest Portugal may have trouble raising money. Under its €78 billion (\$104 billion) bailout from euro-zone countries and the International Monetary Fund, Portugal must borrow €10 billion from private markets in 2013; if it doesn't, it can't make a €9.7 billion bond repayment that September.

Unless bond yields fall substantially, to a level suggesting Portugal has a chance at tapping markets, the issue could arise as soon as late spring; the IMF requires that such "funding gaps" be resolved a year ahead of time.

There are reasons to believe some investors won't return. As credit-rating firms downgraded Portugal, its bonds lost favor with the pension funds and other big buyers of government debt who follow indexes of investment-grade securities.

## Euro Zone by the Numbers

The 17-nation euro zone is a collection of countries with vastly different economic profiles. See how they stack up on the major measures.



## Euro Zone Crisis Tracker

See economic, political and markets news from across Europe as governments and financial institutions deal with the continuing debt crisis.



"Foreign investors have largely disinvested from Portugal simply because it has fallen out of the indexes," said Justin Knight, head of European interest-rate strategy at UBS in London.

And Portuguese financial institutions aren't buying in sustained amounts. Their holdings stood at €23 billion at the end of January, after the first of the ECB's two big cash injections, unchanged from two

months earlier. By contrast, Spanish banks' holdings of their own government's debt jumped 70% in the same period, and Italian banks' holdings of Italy's debt rose more than 15%, central-bank data show.

Portuguese banks rely heavily on the ECB for funding, and they are under regulatory pressure to reduce exposure to risky countries like their own. Some Portuguese banks were burned by holdings of Greek debt. Late Wednesday, Moody's Investors Service downgraded its ratings on four Portuguese banks and the Portuguese subsidiary of Spain's [Banco Santander](#) SA, pointing to mounting pressure from the country's weakening economy.

For buyers of bonds, the chief question is whether Portugal will restructure its debt and impose losses on creditors, as Greece did. UBS's Mr. Knight said the euro zone will try to avoid it, if Portugal shows it is serious about budget discipline. "As long as Portugal has played ball all the way through, we think the [European Union] will be flexible," he said.

The EU and the IMF have signaled they are willing to do more. But there is a risk that public backlash in Germany and other countries makes it harder for them to open their wallets again if Portugal fails to raise money from markets. Moody's Analytics pegs the likelihood of a Portuguese default within the next five years at about 17%, far higher than Ireland, Italy or Spain.

Portuguese leaders have said they are committed to fiscal targets, even if it means more painful cuts. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho said that day's drop in bond yields reflected Portugal's "strong commitment" to the bailout program. And the head of Portugal's biggest bank has said it is "slowly" buying Portuguese government debt.

Still, the challenge is daunting. Mr. Passos Coelho's government made cuts in public spending after it took office last June and imposed more taxes. But hidden debt of the regional government in the island of Madeira, plus shortfalls in the education and defense budgets, upset the plans.

In response, Portugal enacted the pension maneuver, whereby it received an upfront payment in exchange for assuming future liabilities. That narrowed the deficit to beneath the target.

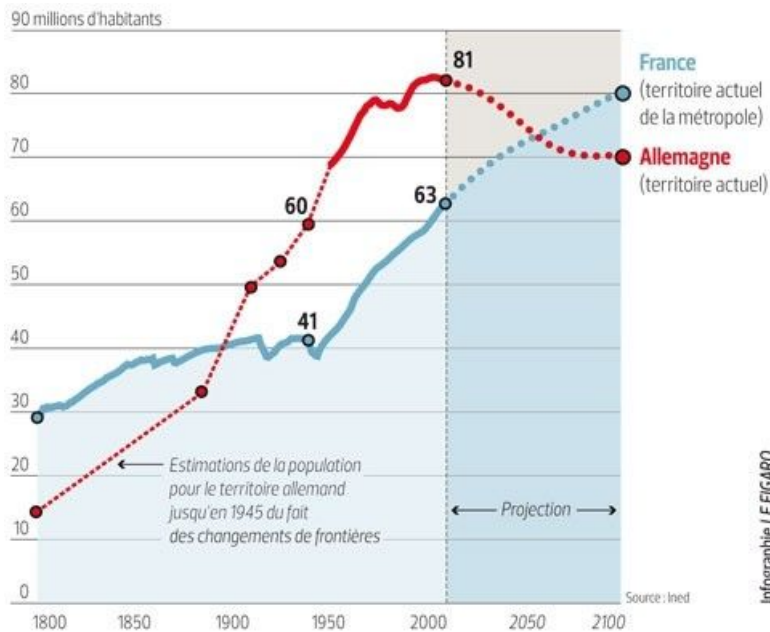
For this year, Portugal's goal is a deficit of 4.5% of gross domestic product. It drew up a budget in October aimed at meeting that target, but the economic outlook already has darkened.

Finance Minister Vitor Gaspar said in October that the jobless rate should be 13.4% for 2012, while the economy should shrink 2.8%. The contraction since has been revised to 3.3%, and many economists expect worse. Unemployment reached 14.8% in January.

The effects already are clear: The government raised less money from taxes and spent more on unemployment benefits in the first two months of 2012 than it did a year ago.

# Plus de Français que d'Allemands en 2055

Le Figaro Par [Agnès Leclair](#) Mis à jour le 29/03/2012 à 10:44 | publié le 29/03/2012 à 10:21 [Réactions](#) (12)



## 150 ans plus tard, la France de nouveau devant l'Allemagne

ÉVOLUTION DE LA POPULATION DE LA FRANCE ET DE L'ALLEMAGNE DE 1800 À 2100

### L'Ined souligne le rôle de la politique familiale.

*Frankreich über alles?* En [démographie](#) du moins. L'Institut national d'études démographiques (Ined) publie une étude comparée des démographies du couple européen qui fait ressortir le dynamisme hexagonal. Côté Français, les femmes mettent au monde deux enfants en moyenne chacune et la population augmente. Outre-Rhin, les femmes n'en n'ont qu'un et demi et la population diminue, rappelle le directeur de recherches Gilles Pison dans cette [«Histoire d'un chassé-croisé démographique»](#).

À tel point qu'en 2055, la population de la France pourrait rattraper celle de l'Allemagne selon les projections moyennes des Nations unies. Ce scénario se fonde sur l'hypothèse que la fécondité continue de remonter en Allemagne et en France, y atteignant respectivement 1,92 et 2,06 enfants en 2055. Il table également sur un allongement de la durée de vie de part et d'autre et un solde migratoire de 1 ‰ cette année-là dans les deux pays. La population française pourrait alors être de 72 millions et celle de l'Allemagne de 71 millions. Pour expliquer cet écart actuel de fécondité entre les voisins, Gilles Pison souligne, comme nombre d'analystes, le poids de la politique familiale française.

### Efforts trop récents

En Allemagne par contre, le souvenir de la période nataliste nazie a pesé sur son développement. Aujourd'hui cependant, si l'on exclut le quotient familial, les Allemands dépensent presque autant que les Français pour aider les familles, note l'Ined. Un peu moins si l'on prend en compte le quotient familial. Mais leurs efforts seraient encore trop récents et centrés sur le soutien financier.

«L'offre de garde d'enfants en bas âge est moins abondante qu'en France, rendant la conciliation entre vie familiale et vie professionnelle plus difficile », selon le chercheur. La conviction des Allemands «qu'une bonne mère doit s'occuper elle-même de son bébé et ne pas partir travailler en le laissant à la crèche dans la journée» joue aussi un rôle sur la fécondité, rapporte Gilles Pison. Même si, outre-Rhin, les mentalités commencent à évoluer.

## A Fashion Magazine Unshy About Baring a Bit of Piety

By [DAN BILEFSKY](#)

- ISTANBUL — Across a neon-lighted corridor in a hyper-designed modernist loft here, a group of Eastern European models posed coquettishly for a magazine spread, their heads covered in brightly colored scarves.
- Except for the religious headgear, the shoot could have been for any glossy fashion magazine. But Ala — called the “Vogue of the veiled” in the Turkish news media — is no conventional publication. In an unlikely fusion of conservative Muslim values and high fashion, it unabashedly appeals to the pious head-scarf-wearing working woman, who may covet a Louis Vuitton purse but has no use for the revealing clothing that pervades traditional fashion magazines.
- One of Ala’s founders, Ibrahim Burak Birer, 31, a religious Muslim and a former marketing analyst who favors jeans and designer jackets, said he decided to start the magazine — its name means “the most beautiful of the beautiful” in Turkish — after seeing a transsexual with strap-on breasts in a transparent dress on the cover of an international fashion magazine.
- “We realized that there was a gap to be filled for conservative Muslim women in [Turkey](#) who have a different worldview,” he said in an interview at Ala’s sleek offices, where young women in head scarves sit hunched over Apple computers. “Until now, most fashion magazines have offered a lifestyle centered on being sexy, being skinny and eating sushi. But not all women dress like those girls from ‘Sex and the City.’ ”
- Ala adheres to strict Islam-inspired sartorial guidelines: arms and heads must be covered; tight pants and skirts above the ankle are forbidden. But, Mr. Birer said, the Koran has no prohibition on five-inch stiletto heels. “You can be elegant and sophisticated,” he said. “Female beauty is O.K. as long as it’s not seductive.”
- The success of Ala, which has attracted 30,000 subscribers since its founding in June, reflects the rise of an Islamic bourgeoisie in Turkey that has prospered under the Islam-inspired Justice and Development Party of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.
- This religious merchant class, which sees nothing incompatible between wearing a head scarf and driving a Mercedes, is altering the society in a country once dominated by a secular elite that banned the wearing of head scarves in public institutions. In Istanbul today, religious businessmen endure six-month waiting lists for \$150,000 BMWs, while hip young women in head scarves, skinny jeans and bright red lipstick throng the more than 80 shopping malls in the city. Head scarves are also now ubiquitous on college campuses.
- In Ala, page after page of beautiful women in designer head scarves underscore Turkey’s growing comfort with such outward displays of religion.
- Yet for all of Ala’s avowed restraint, the magazine and its attention-grabbing images of pouting models staring suggestively in their costly outfits have been criticized by some religious scholars. They argue that regardless of whether a woman is photographed showing off a head scarf or sexy lingerie, such behavior violates Islam, which calls for women not to flaunt their femininity.
- Other Muslim intellectuals have denounced Ala for championing what they call a crass commercialism at odds with Islam. (An Islamic concept called *israf* forbids consuming more than one needs.) Others have doubts about the magazine’s use of lithe Eastern European models.
- A recent issue featured an article on an opulent seaside hotel in the Mediterranean coastal town of Marmaris, complete with a landing wharf for private yachts and a separate beach, a pool and prayer facilities for men and women. Another article extolled a new line of luxurious alcohol-free perfumes called Raviseine, created by two Pakistani-born brothers. The writer noted that the perfumes were inspired by the Seine and did not contain animal products like pork that could be deemed un-Islamic.
- In an interview in a recent issue, a 24-year-old homemaker listed the five things she could not live without: her red scarf, white silk shirt, black pants, pumps and Chanel Allure perfume.

- “Magazines like Ala try to promote a monsterlike capitalism by telling people to consume goods that people in Turkey really can’t afford,” said Ali Bulac, a Muslim intellectual. “Our religion, our prophet’s lifestyle, encourage us to act and live in modesty, not like the world represented by Ala.”
- But Mr. Birer said there was nothing incompatible between living a good life and being a good Muslim. Beneath the criticism he detects an antiquated view of some conservatives that Muslim women should be submissive and invisible.
- “Some people criticize us because they think women belong in the home or in the kitchen,” he said, adding that his wife, who advises him on fashion, wears a head scarf and works as a playwright.
- As for why Ala was importing leggy non-Muslim models from Eastern Europe rather than using homegrown ones, he said they were simply cheaper. Moreover, he said, some Turkish models can be reluctant to appear veiled in a country where the head scarf has been caught up in a culture war between secularists and religious conservatives.
- Hulya Aslan, Ala’s editor, a 24-year-old in a striking leopard-patterned head scarf, argued that the magazine’s depiction of fashionable veiled women reflected the empowerment of a generation of pious women in Turkey and was helping to overcome outmoded stereotypes about wearing the head scarf.
- “For too long the head scarf was used as a political weapon, but there are millions of young women like me who wear the [hijab](#); we are helping to break taboos,” she said. “We are also overcoming the cliché that head scarves are only for old aunties.”
- With Turkey’s regional stature growing — and with Turkish exports like soap operas and fashion gaining a foothold in the Arab world — Mr. Birer and his business partner Mehmet Volkan Atay, 32, say they are hoping to capitalize by eventually publishing Ala across the Middle East.
- “Turkey is becoming a model in the Middle East, and Ala could have wider appeal,” Mr. Atay said.
- But not everyone is convinced. Ayse Bohurler, a founding member of the governing party and a leading conservative thinker, said she was skeptical of what she called the magazine’s mixed message to pious women.
- “Islam is a religion that promotes modernity,” she said. “But when you wear a Gucci head scarf, that doesn’t make you a more modern woman.”
- Sebnem Arsu contributed reporting.

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## Europe's Firewall Follies

### **With Italy and Spain too big to save, squabbling over the size of the ESM looks a lot like deck-chair management.**

Angela Merkel said Monday that the German government will support expanding the resources of the euro zone's bailout fund to €700 billion from €500 billion. The European Commission wants €940 billion for the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), and the Chancellor's proposal is already a retreat from her long-held refusal to top up the stability mechanism at all. The OECD is with the Commission on this one, saying Tuesday that Europe needs "the mother of all firewalls" in place to encourage euro-zone governments to implement pro-growth reforms without fear of imminent financial ruin.

Did we witness the same Greek default this month as everyone else?

As best we can tell, the world did not end (as widely predicted) when Athens was forced to restructure its debt, despite the benefit of previous bailouts. So why does Europe now need to double down on the same bailout medicine that so expensively failed to save Greece?

Under the Merkel compromise, the ESM would subsume the lending resources that have already been committed under the current, €440-billion rescue fund, the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF). That gives the combined fund a total loan volume of €700 billion. But only €500 billion of that is new lending capacity, once existing EFSF commitments to Ireland, Portugal and Greece are subtracted.

Brussels, meanwhile, proposes combining the full capacities of the EFSF and the ESM for a permanent lending volume of €940 billion and new loan capacity of €740 billion. A Commission document leaked last week argues that an insufficient commitment from European Union governments will deter other G-20 countries from making their own pledges toward Europe's salvation. Finance ministers will decide on the firewall's fate when they meet in Copenhagen on Friday.



*Agence France-Presse/Getty Images* German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

But even if the ESM had the €940 billion that the Commission wants, the fund still won't likely be big enough to save Spain and Italy if they end up asking for rescue. The financing needs of Madrid and Rome alone are likely to top €1.2 trillion over the next two years. Squabbling over the difference between €500 billion and €740 billion looks a lot like deck-chair management.

And as for the OECD's claim that a higher firewall will give Southern Europe breathing room to implement reform, the moral hazard of providing a bailout-backstop is as evident as ever. Underlying Europe's rescue model is the still-prevalent misbelief that countries like Ireland and Portugal are merely



suffering the effects of a credit dislocation, and that given some time in financial quarantine they'll be able to return to private credit markets, happy and solvent. They won't, not without the serious structural reform that serial bailouts have mostly failed to spur.

Mrs. Merkel's resistance to the Commission's wildest ambitions for the ESM is to be commended. Even for Europe's more solvent creditors, there is a limit to how much they can pitch in before the fund's credibility is threatened. The EFSF's downgrade by Standard & Poor's made this clear in January, and the wobbly economic news out of Germany, France and the Netherlands makes the lesson painfully relevant still.

Whatever the decision in Europe, eyes are already turning to Washington. The International Monetary Fund meets next month to decide whether to double its contribution to Europe's bailout resources to some \$1 trillion. IMF chief Christine Lagarde has said that won't happen unless Europe makes its own significant moves to bolster confidence.

From the perspective of the Commission and the IMF, there's a sort of coordination game here: Europe needs to put all its chips on the table so that other creditors will be reassured that their contributions won't be drawn upon—so great is the calm that the firewall engenders—and hence will be inclined to give more. There are major risks associated with going all-in, however. Taxpayers in Britain, Germany and America will have to decide whether they want to take the leap.

## Loner, Loser, Killer

By OLIVIER ROY

The murderous attack on a Jewish school, and before that on French soldiers, has brought a strong emotional reaction in France. Once again, the specter of disenfranchised and radicalized young French Muslims hovers over the destitute neighborhoods of France's cities. Fifty years after the end of the war in Algeria, a new kind of civil war seems to be raging.

A closer look, however, shows that the picture is rather different.

First, the 23-year-old perpetrator of these acts of terror, Mohammed Merah, was a loner and a loser. Far from embodying a growing radicalization among the youth, he stood at the margins not only of French society but also of the Muslim community.

Merah was not known for his piety: He did not belong to any religious congregation; he did not belong to any radical group or even to a local Islamic movement. A petty delinquent, psychologically fragile, he tried to enlist in the French Foreign Legion and then left for Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Merah found in Al Qaeda a narrative of solitary heroism and a way, after months of watching videos on the Internet, to achieve short-term notoriety and find a place in the real world. In this sense, he was far closer to Anders Behring Breivik, who went on a killing spree in Norway last July in the name of a hatred of Muslims. People like these are difficult to spot precisely because they do not belong to a network of militant cells.

Yet the crimes of such men are often misconstrued as symbolizing different problems. Whereas non-Muslim lone terrorists like Breivik tend to be called mentally ill, Muslim lone terrorists like Merah are seen as embodying "Muslim wrath." This is to miss an essential point.

Consider Merah's attack on the French soldiers. If his killings at the Jewish school in Toulouse were a terrible reflection of the kind of anti-Semitism typically promoted by Al Qaeda, his attack on French soldiers — specifically Muslim ones — was novel and revealing of something else. He saw the soldiers as traitors: French Muslims fighting the Taliban in Afghanistan. The gap he perceived between himself and them reveals the gap between the few Muslims who become so marginalized as to murder and the many more who find ways to integrate.

The disenfranchised youth who are supposedly vulnerable to terrorism are also a reservoir of potential army recruits. For every Qaeda sympathizer there are thousands of Muslims who don the French Army uniform and fight under the French flag — including, of course, in Afghanistan. They are loyal and also willing to die on the battlefield. Ten years ago there were reports of Muslim soldiers refusing to fight against fellow Muslims in Afghanistan; one case was documented. But most soldiers did their duty. It suffices to look at the list of the dead or to watch videos of military funerals to confirm this. Yet the fact is seldom acknowledged because it does not fit with the usual perception of Muslims as dissidents.

In fact the growing presence of Muslim recruits in the army (including elite paratrooper units) is a sign of the growing integration of Muslims in France. (The parallel with the United States is interesting: The integration of African-Americans in the army preceded the movement for the integration of the entire society.)

The poor “banlieues” are still destitute and will remain so, and they will host their shares of juvenile delinquency, radicalism and violence. But they are not the place where the face of French Islam is being shaped.

The changing patterns are evident among the among the growing Muslim middle classes: people who leave the ghettos, enroll their children in Catholic schools (there are only a few Muslim schools in France) and are filling the ranks of doctors, local journalists, teachers and municipal councilors.

The discrepancy between the media narratives — Al Qaeda is the vanguard of the disenfranchised Muslims living in France — and the social reality — Muslim terrorists are as isolated and mentally imbalanced as non-Muslim terrorists — fuels distrust and tensions among the majority of French Muslims. They keep a low profile, not only because they don’t want to attract attention, but also because they want to live their faith quite privately.

***Olivier Roy** is a professor of political science at the European University Institute in Florence, and the author of “Holy Ignorance: When Religion and Culture Part Ways.”*

## After Killings in France, Muslims Fear a Culture of Diversity Is at Risk

TOULOUSE, France — As near to the Spanish border as it is to the Mediterranean, this sunny red-brick city has long been known as a place of welcome and diversity, far removed from the divisive politics of Paris. In contrast to much of the French south, the far right, with its virulent anti-immigrant stance, has little presence here. Nor does radical Islam.

Toulouse is by no means without racism, anti-Semitism, crime or the deep social segregation that marks many French cities, but with a culture shaped by successive waves of [immigration](#), it is described by its inhabitants as a place of particular tolerance.

Hundreds of thousands of Spaniards fled the Franco dictatorship into France after the Spanish Civil War, and many settled here. So, too, did the *pieds noirs*, the French expelled from newly independent Algeria in 1962, as well as the *harkis*, the Algerians who had backed the French colonialists, and thousands of Jews.

In addition to a host of universities and research centers, the aerospace giant Airbus is based here, attracting engineers and scientists from around the world.

So while Muslims across France speak of feeling vilified, this city has largely been spared the tensions that surround Islam. “It is true that from time to time we are subjected to hateful political discourse,” said Mohamed Tataï, the imam at the mosque El Nour in Empalot, a poor neighborhood. It is effectively imported from outside the city, though, he said, often around election time. “Afterwards, we’re able to return to calm once again.”

There are concerns, though, that [Mohammed Merah](#) may have changed that.

The [seven brutal killings](#) carried out this month by Mr. Merah — a 23-year-old son of Toulouse, and a professed jihadi — occurred during a divisive presidential race that had already turned toward questions of immigration and Islam. Even though investigators say Mr. Merah was effectively a lone, self-radicalized extremist, his violent ideology fits closely with some French stereotypes of Islam, and Muslims here fear that the tensions brought on by the murders may prove more lasting.

“All of this does not correspond at all with what Toulouse is,” Pierre Cohen, the mayor, said of the killings. But “we’ve just come out of a very tense period,” he said. “Unfortunately, this risk exists.”

Already, a false rumor has spread through the city, Mr. Cohen said, suggesting that Muslims were organizing a demonstration in defense of Mr. Merah.

“There will be a ‘before’ and an ‘after,’ ” said Yassin Elmu’min, 23, a round-faced young man with blue eyes and short hair slicked into tight curls. Typically, Mr. Elmu’min said, there is “dialogue” between cultures in Toulouse, and Muslims are treated well. But he and other Muslims, many living in the poor suburbs outside downtown Toulouse, said they had already begun to detect nervous gazes that were uncharacteristic of this city.

“Someone had the nerve to ask me, ‘Do you agree with what he did?’ ” Mr. Elmu’min said, exasperated. President Nicolas Sarkozy called for the rejection of “easy falsehoods” about Muslims last week, after Mr. Merah was killed by police commandos, Mr. Elmu’min said. “The ‘easy falsehoods’ are already here,” he lamented.

A friend, Abd'allah, 19, dressed in a cream-colored djellaba beneath a hooded sweatshirt, said, "We're the victims in the story." He declined to give his full name, saying he feared trouble from the French authorities.

Despite Mr. Sarkozy's recent appeals for tolerance, many Muslims say he has done much to stigmatize them, pointing often to a 2010 law [banning the Islamic full veil](#), or [niqab](#), and to a debate on "the national identity."

[Marine Le Pen](#), the presidential candidate for the [far-right National Front](#), has been vociferous in her response to the killings.

"What happened is not the matter of one man's madness; what happened is the beginning of the forward march of green fascism in our country," Ms. Le Pen said on Sunday, referring to radical Islam. "How many Mohammed Merahs are there in the boats, the planes that arrive each day in France, full of immigrants?"

Muslim leaders have denounced such attempts to exploit the killings politically. In a statement shortly after Mr. Merah's death last week, Mohammed Moussaoui, the president of the French Council for the Muslim Faith, asked that the term "Islamism" be abandoned because it "feeds the confusion between Islam and terrorism and brings suffering to millions of Muslims who feel it important to defend the dignity of their faith and their religion."

In Toulouse, Mr. Elmu'min and his friend had come from Friday Prayer at the Mosque of Mirail Toulouse, a sprawling makeshift prayer space in a temporary building at the edge of a mall parking lot, beneath the elevated railroad tracks at the terminus of Line A of the Métro.

Mamadou Daffé, the Malian-born imam at the mosque, said he had never been the target of so much as a racist remark in Toulouse.

"None, none at all," Mr. Daffé said. "Maybe this is surprising, but so be it."

Mr. Daffé, who makes his living as a pharmacological researcher, describes himself as a moderate Muslim, a proponent of "local Islam" who preaches in French.

But in his address to the hundreds of men who gathered at the mosque on Friday — some in white djellabas, thick beards and skullcaps, but most in jeans, suit coats or leather jackets — he spoke angrily of the "injustices" being wrought against Muslims in France, especially after the killings.

Politicians have called for restraint, Mr. Daffé said, but those same politicians have long stoked the very hate they now say they must smother. He called upon the faithful to be exemplary in their behavior, though.

"We are responsible for the image that's been given to Islam, this beautiful religion," he said. With the murders, which Mr. Merah said he committed in the name of Islam, "God has tested us," Mr. Daffé said.

His fellow cleric, Mr. Tataï, has led a project to build a grand mosque in Toulouse. A decade ago, local authorities were opposed, Mr. Tataï recalled, but gradually warmed to the notion. The domed, multistory ocher building, at the edge of the Empalot neighborhood, adjacent to the highway, is now almost complete. (Uncharacteristically, the mosque will be open to the non-Muslim public, outside hours of prayer.)

"Of course there is the fear that there will be backlash from the black week we've just lived through," Mr. Tataï said. He added, "This is a test of the good will and wisdom of the wise." He remains optimistic.

## Sarkozy: du soutien pour les élèves en grande difficulté

Le Figaro, par [Marie-Estelle Pech](#) Publié le 27/03/2012 à 22:34 [Réactions](#) (28)

### **L'objectif serait de mieux s'occuper des 100.000 enfants qui sortent du primaire sans les acquis fondamentaux exigés en français et mathématiques.**

[Nicolas Sarkozy](#) n'oublie pas les écoliers en difficulté. Parmi ses propositions, en partie inspirées de ses échanges avec [Jean-Louis Borloo](#), il estime qu'un soutien «pluridisciplinaire» devrait être mis en place pour les élèves en «très grande difficulté scolaire à l'école primaire». «Nous pensons que la réforme de l'école primaire avec les deux heures de soutien personnalisé qui ont été mises en place par Xavier Darcos fonctionne bien mais peut être améliorée», explique-t-on dans son équipe de campagne. L'objectif serait de mieux s'occuper des 100.000 enfants qui sortent du primaire sans les acquis fondamentaux exigés en français et mathématiques.

Il s'agirait d'une déclinaison des contrats éducatifs locaux mis en place en 1998 et remaniés en 2005 par Jean-Louis Borloo en «contrats de réussite éducative». Ces contrats organisent notamment l'accompagnement péri-scolaire des enfants «fragiles» de 2 à 16 ans. «Nous souhaitons mieux piloter ces contrats», détaille-t-on. «Dans chaque école primaire, une instance de traitement des difficultés scolaires pourrait recevoir des moyens dédiés pour le soutien scolaire avec des orthophonistes, psychologues, enseignants, éducateurs, etc.» Jean-Louis Borloo a récemment développé les idées de son plan contre l'échec scolaire en précisant qu'il souhaitait «un comité de soutien» avec «un professeur spécialisé à 16 h 30» après l'école. Cette structure impliquerait les parents via des initiatives existantes comme la «mallette des parents» ou les «écoles des parents».

### **Implication des parents**

Destinée à améliorer le dialogue entre les parents d'élèves et l'école, la «mallette des parents» qui pourrait donc être généralisée aux classes de primaire propose aux établissements des outils pour organiser trois ateliers débats avec les parents d'élèves de sixième dans 1300 collèges et d'élèves de troisième dans 39 collèges. L'implication des parents est en effet un facteur essentiel de réussite scolaire, selon le ministère de l'Éducation nationale. Ce dispositif permet «d'accompagner les parents dans leur rôle et de soutenir leur implication, en rendant plus compréhensibles les enjeux de la scolarité et le fonctionnement de l'institution.» Expérimenté depuis 2008 à Créteil, il contribuerait à la prévention de l'absentéisme et de la violence à l'école.