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Writing the History of the FAZ: Rise and Fall of an Ordoliberal Leitmotif

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Writing the History of the FAZ: Rise and Fall of an Ordoliberal Leitmotif*

This is a pioneering historiographical work. Maximilian Kutzner's dissertation examines the role of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung's* (FAZ) editorial department for economics as a media actor between 1949 and 1992. Kutzner does so through the lens of the newspaper's intellectual »leitmotif«, defined as a set of characteristic argumentative and mental figures recurrently employed by the editorial staff (38). He follows recent approaches in media history by regarding media not only as carriers of information but as independent actors with their own agenda. Due to its great prestige, the frequent reference made to its articles in other media, and its regular usage by decision makers, the FAZ belongs to Germany's most important broadsheets (1) and thus represents an excellent object of investigation. As part of a larger research project on the FAZ's history from its foundation to the present at Würzburg University, Kutzner was among the first historians to gain access to the internal archive of the newspaper.

The structure of the book follows a chronological order and is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the newspaper's prehistory and establishment, with an emphasis on the economic department's importance within the paper and its strategic mission to provide journalistic support for legitimising the emerging social market economy in West Germany (17–36). From the very beginning, the connections and frequent contact with important ordoliberal economists, above all Walter Eucken from Freiburg, ensured that the FAZ was normatively oriented towards ordoliberal thought, i. e. free competition, strict monetary stability, and the rule of law. Thankfully, Kutzner does not limit himself to describing the FAZ's ordoliberal leitmotif and the department's interactions with the Federal Ministry of Economics under Ludwig

Erhard (37–49), aspects that are known from previous research, but also analyses how these ordoliberal influences were internally processed. He enriches the historical narrative with new dimensions by describing structural aspects of the editorial work such as personnel (50–74), organisation (75–82) and layout (83–90).

On this basis, the second part of the book is devoted to the changing thematic focus of the economic department. The first phase analysed by Kutzner covers the years of the so-called »economic miracle« (1949–1966) and describes how the department's editors were able to influence the public relations work of Erhard's Ministry through both personal relationships and medial pressure (107–180). The second phase deals with the long 1970s, when the FAZ found its role as an extra-parliamentary, journalistic opposition to the prevailing welfare policies and the subsidies for industries affected by structural change (181–268). During this period, the previously dominant ordoliberal leitmotif was replaced by an increasingly pragmatic and free-market view on economic issues. This was linked to changes in the department's personnel structure. Academic degrees were no longer decisive for gaining a position, although a certain liberal basis was still required. The book closes with the disappointed hopes of the editors between 1982 and 1992, when it became clear that a return to the economic policy principles of the 1950s failed to materialise, despite Chancellor Helmut Kohl's rhetoric to the contrary (269–316).

From a legal-historical perspective it is particularly interesting that the historical significance of the FAZ's economic department was most evident in the debate on the *Gesetz gegen Wettbewerbsbeschränkungen* (GWB), a law that eventually en-

* MAXIMILIAN KUTZNER, Marktwirtschaft schreiben. Das Wirtschaftsressort der Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung 1949 bis 1992 (Medienakteure der Moderne 1), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2019, XI + 360 p., ISBN 978-3-16-158179-3

tered into force in 1958 and established the Federal Cartel Office responsible for the protection of competition in West Germany. Opponents of the law, such as the Federation of German Industry (BDI), perceived the FAZ's economic department as a strong adversary, since the latter not only disseminated the arguments of the law's supporters but also sought to influence the political process itself (117–139). For example, editors wanted to dissuade Erhard from his willingness to compromise in the parliamentary negotiations on the GWB's draft. The debate also illustrates how strongly the FAZ's ordoliberal leitmotif was actually reflected in day-to-day reporting. The department followed the competition-theoretical views of Franz Böhm, an ordoliberal lawyer and politician who stood in close contact with the economic department's first executive editor, Erich Welter, and provided the latter with access to information and actors from the political field. The »Seven Years' War« (a *Spiegel* headline on July 3, 1957) surrounding the GWB was a significant episode in post-war German history, which led to a medialisation of politics and a politicisation of the FAZ.

Even if Kutzner initially asserts that he does not aim to write a history of ideas of the FAZ's ordoliberal leitmotif (16), it is present throughout his entire analysis. He implicitly relies on a rather broad definition of ordoliberalism, which includes not only foundational authors such as Eucken and Böhm, but also the sociological strand around Wilhelm Röpke and Alexander Rüstow, and pragmatists like Erhard and Alfred Müller-Armack. Kutzner's clear and correct differentiation between ordoliberal ideas, as originally used in the development of the social market economy, and market-liberal positions à la F. A. von Hayek, which became more popular in the 1980s, is very welcome (292). However, the accusation of a BDI representative in 1954 that the FAZ was too »neoliberal« is not necessarily an »incorrect« ascription (135) intended to annoy the opponent, as suggested by the author, since neoliberal was a commonly used term in the early post-war period for denoting the Freiburg school, initially even serving as self-description.

Likewise illuminating are the economic editorial department's institutional links with the Federal Ministry of Economics (108–117), the Federal Cartel Office (128 f., 137, 212), and later also the German Central Bank (278) that Kutzner has been able to identify. Since these are precisely those

institutions to which an ordoliberal orientation is often ascribed, it would be promising to examine this ideological persistence more closely from a network-theoretical perspective. So far, this has been done mainly for the overall group of neoliberal economists, but Kutzner's account suggests that researchers should rather focus on the ordoliberal subgroup while simultaneously widening the perspective to include lawyers and economic editors. While ordoliberal ideas were quickly marginalised academically after World War II, they seem to have been much more influential in the long term at the institutional level – with far-reaching consequences for Germany's behaviour during the Euro crisis, if one may believe the latest research in this area.

Finally, a methodological comment is in order. The FAZ digital full text archive contains 616,665 individual sources for the period 1949–1992. In view of this abundance of sources, Kutzner decided to use systematic random selection to form a sample of 114 days, on the basis of which he then derives topics for the subsequent analysis. At some points in his narrative, he supplements this qualitative approach with quantitative visualisations of absolute word frequencies (e.g. 129, 234, 256 f.). Future research could interweave Kutzner's results more strongly with new methodological approaches from the field of digital humanities. For example, a so-called Topic Modelling analysis could provide information on how representative the manually selected topics actually are. A second example: When Kutzner writes about stock market reporting as a *Stimmungseismograpf* (294), this points to opportunities for sentiment analysis, which quantifies emotions expressed in texts. These quantifications could in turn be compared with changes in writing style (from complex to accessible) and in thematic focus (from news and price information to in-depth analysis for private investors) described by Kutzner.

In sum, Kutzner succeeds in providing an inspiring analysis of the historical role of the FAZ's economic department, which will serve as an important reference work for all future research in this area. This was also acknowledged by the German Society for Journalism and Communication Sciences, which awarded the book the 2020 Young Researchers' Prize for the History of Communication. *Marktwirtschaft schreiben* raises awareness of the effectiveness of language and the scope of action of individual editors, while at the same

time offering a colourful panorama of German economic reporting during the post-war period – ranging from stock tips for private investors to the motor and sports pages, which also fell within the remit of the economic department. Given the possibilities offered by the digital humanities for

the analysis of large corpora such as the FAZ text archive, there is well-founded hope that this is only the beginning of a growing field of research.



Vera Fritz

Connaître le passé pour construire le futur*

Si l'intégration européenne est régulièrement sous le feu des critiques pour son édification imparfaite, il aurait en 1952 été difficile d'imaginer qu'elle couvrirait un jour un champ géographique et de compétences aussi large que l'Union européenne le fait aujourd'hui. L'UE est donc une utopie en construction, qui continue sans cesse de se développer et de se perfectionner. C'est avec cette idée que Giuliano Amato (juge à la Cour constitutionnelle italienne, ancien Président du Conseil des Ministres italien), Enzo Moavero-Milanesi (ancien Ministre italien des affaires étrangères), Gianfranco Pasquino (Professeur de science politique et sénateur italien) et Lucrezia Reichlin (Professeur d'économie) ouvrent leur publication collective. Les quatre éditeurs partent du principe suivant: pour comprendre l'édifice de plus en plus complexe, le véritable «labyrinthe législatif» (2) que représente l'UE de nos jours, il convient de regarder en arrière et de s'intéresser au développement progressif de ses différents secteurs d'activité. Tel est le but des vingt-sept chapitres qu'ils proposent et qui affichent un objectif ambitieux: présenter «the definitive history» (quatrième de couverture), c'est-à-dire une histoire exhaustive, des deux premières générations de l'Union européenne. Le champ des thématiques abordées est par conséquent vaste. Il va de la construction institutionnelle et juridique de l'UE jusqu'à sa politique économique, sociale et fiscale. Les auteurs des chapitres sont présentés comme juristes, poli-

tistes et économistes ayant joué un rôle d'acteur, d'arbitre et d'architecte dans la construction européenne. On retrouve parmi eux notamment plusieurs anciens Commissaires ou Parlementaires européens, ainsi que des responsables politiques italiens. D'autres sont des juristes de renom ayant essentiellement fait carrière dans le monde académique, à l'instar de Marise Cremona, Renaud Dehousse et Joseph H. H. Weiler.

L'ouvrage est divisé en six sections thématiques. La première propose un certain nombre de réflexions autour des valeurs de l'UE (démocratie, protection des droits fondamentaux, principes de compétition et de solidarité), mais aussi des difficultés auxquelles celle-ci est confrontée. Les contributions des sections II à IV suivent ensuite pour la plupart une structure similaire: elles examinent une compétence ou un point de fonctionnement de l'UE et proposent un passage en revue de son développement progressif, si possible à partir des Traités de Rome de 1957, voire du Traité de Paris de 1951. Parmi les sujets abordés dans la section II, on peut relever les continuités entre les différents Traités et la structure institutionnelle qu'ils mettent en place, le principe de primauté du droit européen et la protection des droits fondamentaux. La troisième partie, consacrée aux droits et opportunités des citoyens européens, est moins cohérente en termes de sujets proposés, puisqu'elle regroupe ensemble la non-discrimination des minorités, le programme Erasmus et l'harmonisation

* GIULIANO AMATO, ENZO MOAVERO-MILANESI et al. (coords.), *The History of the European Union. Constructing Utopia*, Oxford: Hart Publishing 2019, 592 p., ISBN 978-1-5099-1741-9