



Sex, Blood, and Death

“The HI-Virus causes AIDS”. The universally held acceptance of this theory demonstrates how scientific journalism disregards significant inconsistencies to dispel any doubts about authenticity.

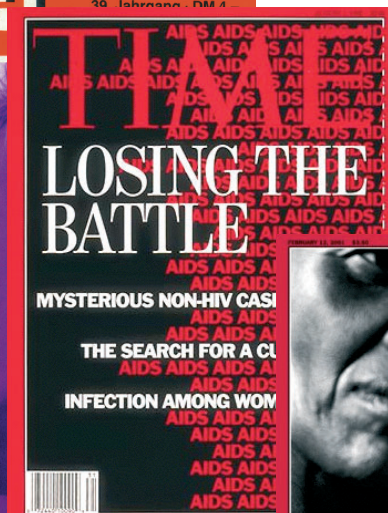
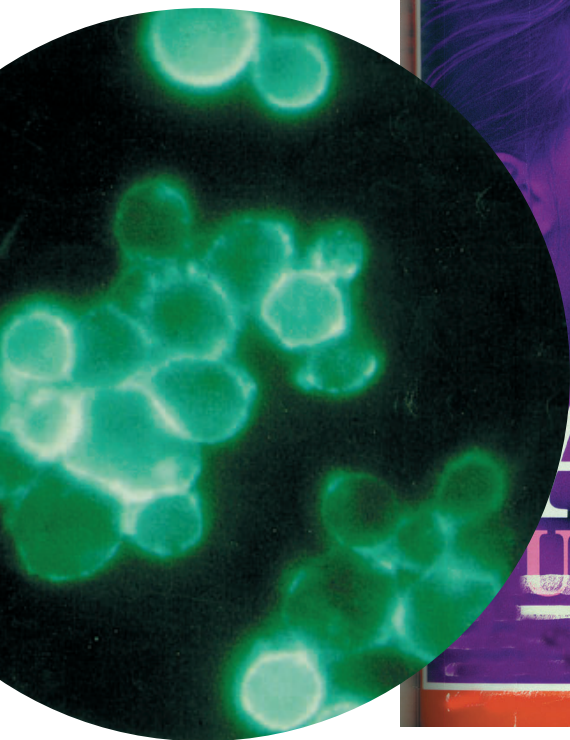
BY TORSTEN ENGELBRECHT

July 16th, 2004, a few minutes past 8 p.m. “The World-AIDS-Conference in Bangkok has come to an end - and the result is frightening,” says *Tagesschau* anchor Jo Brauner to his 4.2-million-audience. “All previous actions taken in the fight against AIDS have failed. More than twenty million people have already died from AIDS.”

Then we see pictures of demonstrators in black T-shirts on which are printed: “Stop medical

apartheid – AIDS drugs now.” One poster shows US-president Bush smeared with red color.

Speaking into the camera of the *Tagesschau* reporter, a member of the relief organization Actionaid explains, “many people here are angry with the Americans,” The US would prevent “even the poorest of people from having access to affordable AIDS medication”. The camera zooms in on a Thai man lying in a hospital bed. His arms and legs resemble those of a mummy – mere skin and bones.



The indignation about “the deadly ignorance”, as *Die Zeit* called it, stormed through the media. “The powerful people of the world,” wrote *Zeit*-correspondent Bartholomäus Grill, are guilty of “mass murder”, since “the most terrible weapon of mass destruction is called Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV)”. It unfolds its ghastly effect “fast, elusively, and without boundaries,” in China, India, and Africa just as it does in Russia, Latvia and the Ukraine “and from there to here, in western Europe” (*Die Zeit*, July 15th, 2004).

No lifesaver

What exactly does spread? Not even the virologically educated medical experts among the scientific journalists have been able to show where, by whom, and how HIV was discovered and identified as the cause of AIDS.

To say it in the words of the 1993 Nobel Laureate in chemistry Kary Mullis: “I’m not a lifeguard, I’m a scientist. In the 17th Century around the founding of the Royal Society it was decided how sci-

ence works: The way science was to stake its claims was not what somebody believes, it’s experimental proof that counts. And those guys don’t have that.” Because no one has ever published anything which proves that HIV is even a probable cause of AIDS. In his essay “The Medical Establishment Versus The Truth”, Mullis states: “Always there are people talking about HIV. I asked them how it was that we knew HIV was the cause of AIDS. Everyone said something. Everyone had the answer at home, in the office, in some drawer. They all knew, and they would send me the papers as soon as they got back. But I never got any papers. Nobody ever sent me the news about how AIDS was caused by HIV (Mullis, 1998, p. 174).

Many renowned scientists, such as Harvey Bialy, founder of *nature biotechnology*, or Harry

»Everyone had the answer at home, in the office, in some drawer. They all knew, and they would send me the papers as soon as they got back.«

Rubin and Peter Duesberg, leading experts on retrovirology, agree with Mullis. Some researchers, like Etienne de Harven, pioneer of electron microscopy, Heinz Ludwig Saenger, retired professor for molecular biology and virology at the Max-Planck-Institute, or the Australian Perth-Group even state that the existence of HIV has never been proven (Papadopoulos-Eleopoulos et al., 2004, p. 597-601).

What Mullis addresses should also be fundamental to the media: facts count first. But the media has been having problems with just these facts since the beginning of the AIDS-issue, when, in 1983, the *New York Times* wrote about a “worldwide health problem”. At that time, not taking the facts into account, *Spiegel* and *Bild der Wissenschaft* were already quite sure that civilisation was going downhill and anticipated that the last German would die of AIDS in 1996 („AIDS: Die Bombe ist gelegt“, in: *Der Spiegel* 45/1984; „AIDS - eine neue Krankheit erschüttert Deutschland“, in *Bild der Wissenschaft* 12/1985).

On what or whom did the media base this catastrophic scenario? Mostly on the Cassandra-like talk of fame hungry physicians who turned the subject into a headline from the very beginning. It must be a contagious disease, following the principle spread by Louis Pasteur - “one disease, one cause, one cure” (to quote sociologist Steven Epstein).

In 1959 Pulitzer-Prize winning microbiologist Rene Jules Dubos wrote that “the doctrine of specific etiology” is “unquestionable the most constructive force in medical research for almost a century”, but “few are the cases in which it has provided a complete account of the causation of disease. [The] search for the cause (of AIDS) may be a hopeless pursuit because most diseases are the indirect outcome of a constellation of circumstances.” The Understanding of this concept might be too complicated and not spectacular enough, to be turned into an exciting media story.

The opinions were made

The story of AIDS-reporting started in 1981 with five young homosexual men. They fell ill

with the lung disease PCP (*Pneumocystis carinii* pneumonia), which only becomes a serious illness when the immune system is defective or if immunosuppressive medications are taken. This “hot stuff, hot stuff!”, as a CDC-official called it, reached the media on June 5th, 1981 through a newsletter of the CDC, the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*.

Doers and thinkers

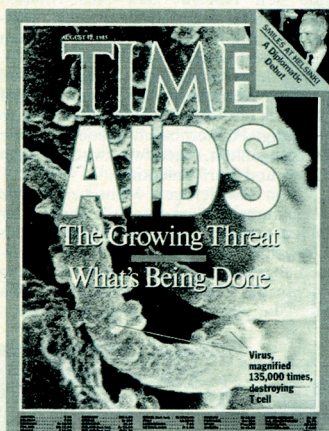
David Durack, in his lead editorial in *The New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)* in late 1981, posed the question of why AIDS is considered something new. Viruses as well as homosexuality are as old as mankind itself. To Durack, certain lifestyle drugs such as “Nitrite Inhalants”, also known as “Poppers” because of the popping noise made when breaking open the ampules, were much more likely to be the cause of AIDS. The use of “poppers” spread widely in the areas where most of the cases of AIDS arose – New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. “The AIDS-victims who weren’t homosexuals turned out to be drug users” (Durack, 1981, p. 1465-1467). The *MMWR*, on the other hand, named sexual contacts as the most likely cause, even though they had no proof.

Shortly after that, the CDC ascertained in four large investigations that, of the so called virus-infected, 80 to 96 percent regularly used Poppers. In 1982, Harry Haverkos analysed the data from three CDC-inquiries of patients suffering from either PCP or Kaposi’s sarcoma (a tumor derived of blood vessels) or both. He came to the conclusion that drugs play an important part. Amazingly, the CDC refused to publish the study of its AIDS-expert Haverkos, who switched to the US Drug Enforcement Agency in 1984, where he was promoted to AIDS-coordinator. The study wasn’t published until 1985, when it appeared in *Sexually Transmitted Diseases*.

In late 1985, the *Wall Street Journal* snatched up the Haverkos-analysis and also evaluated official CDC-statistics. The result was that drug abuse was so universal among AIDS-patients that it, not the virus, had to be discerned as the primary cause of the syndrome (Krieger/Caceres, 1985).

The CDC was already totally immersed in the search for a deadly virus.

SPIEGEL Titel



Aids-Titel, Aids-Schlagzeilen: „Die schwerste Bedrohung seit Jahrzehnten, sicher so ernst wie Krebs“

„Die Promiskuität ist der Motor der Seuche“

Fascination with catastrophic scenarios: press coverage in the western world 1984-85.

But the CDC was already totally immersed in the search for a deadly virus – a path which the CDC had already travelled unsuccessfully so many times in the past decades. Consequently, the second *MMW*-Report (July 3rd, 1981) about the AIDS-issue, which contained more reports of “unusual” cases of PCP and Kaposi’s sarcoma, failed to mention drugs at all. Nor did the third report (August 28th), even though at that time *The New York Times* was still reporting about the immune suppressive drug use of those infected. Three months later, the *NEJM* printed three studies, besides Durack’s main article, about the devastating effects of the Poppers-lifestyle on the immune system. In May of 1982, *The Lancet* even printed an article which postulated “a significant connection” between gays suffering from Kaposi’s sarcoma and “the use of numerous drugs such

Aids: „Die Bombe ist gelegt“

Die Seuche „Aids“ ist in der Bundesrepublik viel weiter verbreitet als bisher vermutet. Ein neu entwickelter Bluttest beweist: Jeder dritte Homosexuelle, jeder fünfte Drogensüchtige und mehrere tausend Bluterkranke

sind mit dem Aids eine Katastrophe den nächsten fünf dem Schwulen-C

Als es mit ihm zu Ende ging, wollte er die alten Freunde nicht mehr sehen. Seine letzten Tage verbrachte der junge Berliner Arzt Dr. Udo S.** im Gespräch mit einer 50jährigen mütterlichen Freundin. Sie stützte ihn, als er dem „KaDe-We“ Lebewohl sagte; dort hat es ihm immer so gut gefallen.

Aus eigener Kraft konnte S. sich nicht mehr auf den Beinen halten. Er war, der Kranke

Das Bundesgesundheitsamt nahm ihn in die Liste der Aids-Toten auf – als 45. deutsches Opfer.

In den nächsten Jahren, so ist zu fürchten, wird dieser Tod – „viel zu früh“ und „nach langer schwerer Krankheit“ – zur weitverbreiteten Chiffre werden: Aids ist im Begriff, Tausende von Deutschen zu töten.

Ein vom Bundesgesundheitsamt ent-

Der Spiegel Nr. 33/1985

as Poppers, cocaine, or amphetamines” (Michael Marmor et al.: “Risk Factors for Kaposi Sarcoma in Homosexual Men”, *The Lancet*, May 1982, p. 1083-1087).

Only source of information

For the German scientific journalists the question of which sources to use was a simple one. “When the first reports about this strange, deadly disease reached us from California, the only real source of information we had were the reports of the CDC,” remembers Hans Halter, the author of the first *Spiegel* title story about AIDS. The headline read “An Epidemic That’s Only Just Beginning” (*Spiegel* Nr. 23/1983). At that time, Halter, himself a specialist for venereal diseases, had reviewed the CDC-data with a befriended virologist. “We knew right away that a retrovirus

WHAT IS AIDS AND WHAT DOES IT DO?

To make the controversies about AIDS-research mentioned in this article a little more understandable, we have compiled a short glossary, to clarify a few of the scientifically backed objections to the official HIV thesis.

What is AIDS? The orthodox opinion is: AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome) is caused by the HI-Virus. Unlike other diseases, there is no uniform definition for AIDS, which could be used as a basis for statistics. Hence, in 1986, the World Health Organization introduced the “Bangui-Definition” for third-world countries, according to which patients are declared to have AIDS just based on the diagnosis of unspecific illnesses like diarrhea, infections and fever, which are very common in poor countries. In wealthier countries, like the USA, patients are declared to have AIDS on the grounds of having tested positive for so-called HIV-antibodies. But this definition of AIDS is circular because it involves a list of dozens of known diseases; and these diseases are only be called AIDS when antibodies are confirmed (antibodies which are non-specific!).

Was HIV proven? To prove the existence of the HI-Virus, it would be necessary to isolate HIV and record the purified form with an electron mikroskope (EM). But even the “discoverer” of HIV, Luc Montagnier, stated in an interview with Continuum-Magazine, in 1997, that the EM-shots showed no particles (proteins, RNA) “with a morphology typical of retroviruses”. But if not even retrovirus-like particles can be seen, then there is no proof for retroviral purification and hence no proof of HIV. EM-Pioneer Etienne de Harven: “No one has ever seen a single retroviral particle with an electron microscope in the blood of a patient, whose PCR-Tests allegedly have ascertained a high viral load.”

HIV = AIDS? Even Montagnier stated in the 1996 ARTE documentary “AIDS - The Doubt” that “there is no scientific proof that HIV causes AIDS.” Even the Robert-Koch-Institute, a strong force in established AIDS research, confirms on its website that there is no study which proves that HIV causes AIDS. Reinhard Kurth, director of the Robert-Koch-Institute, recently told Der Spiegel, “we don’t even exactly know how HIV makes you sick”.

transmitted by blood and semen was to blame.” Though he conceded in his story that, “according to scientific studies, the immune system [of gays] is also weakened by antibiotic treatment, drug abuse, and the intensive use of Poppers,” (Amyl Nitrites). He also claimed that “the Poppers-Hypothesis was the first to fall apart. A control group of homosexuals not being afflicted with AIDS also used the vessel-dilating stimulant, which is supposed to intensify the orgasm.” Critics of the Virus-

Hypothesis like Duesberg, however, doubt that such a study even existed, though Halter admits having trouble remembering things in the distant past.

When asked about it, Halter recommended taking a look at Randy Shilts’ 1987 book “And the Band Played On”. “Maybe you can find some answers there,” he added. However, this greatly acclaimed work states exactly the opposite: it claims that the Poppers-Hypothesis could explain why the syndrome occurred mostly in New York, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, the three centres of the gay community. “Everybody,” Shilts writes, “who got these diseases [PCP, Kaposi’s sarcoma] seemed to snort Poppers. Some five million doses of nitrite inhalants were sold in America in 1980 alone.” An inhalant-drug, whose label warns “Flammable; May be Fatal if Swallowed”, and which, according to the US National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), causes heart damage and “sudden snuffing death”. “You don’t have to be a rocket scientist to see that there is some logic to the [Poppers-AIDS-]hypothesis,” asserts Haverkos.

However, the gay scene vehemently refused to blame Poppers. In 1983, the leading gay magazine *The Advocate* even printed a series of advertisements (“a blueprint for health”) for the leading producer of Poppers, a company called Great Lakes Products. These advertisements falsely announced that state-funded studies had concluded that Poppers were harmless and that they were certainly part of “the magical world of drugs and parties”. At that time, the drug industry bought into the gay community with countless ads for Poppers (Wellcome: “the real thing...amyl nitrite”) and antiretroviral medications (Hoffmann-La Roche: “Success makes confident”).

Great Story

On April 23rd, 1984, US-virologist Robert Gallo and Health Secretary Margaret Heckler appeared on television addressing the world with a message: “Today we add another miracle to the long honour roll of American medicine and science. Today’s discovery represents the triumph of science over a dreaded disease” (Tracey, 2001). But all they really said was that, with the virus HTLV, officially renamed “HIV” in 1986, “the probable cause of AIDS” had been found.

Since then, the terms “virus”, “cause”, and “AIDS” have become inseparable in the minds of physicians and journalists. The world is convinced that AIDS is just a contagious plague, transmitted sexually or through blood transfusions.

Scientific journalists around the globe were enthralled. What a great story, this HIV had become, and what a great man, this Gallo. Only one day after the Heckler-Gallo-conference, the chief medical reporter for the *New York Times*, Lawrence Altman, was so convinced of the Gallo-theory that he made up the term “AIDS-virus” to use in one of his headlines. (Altman, 1984, C1). Since then, the term has become a fixed idea, making something that has yet to be proven.

By the way, Gallo’s investigation didn’t appear in *Science* until weeks after his television appearance, making it impossible for anyone to verify his work before his TV gig. Gallo promoted himself as an infallible scientist and the journalists believed him. The HIV-AIDS-Hypothesis quickly established itself in the media.

...and all questions still unanswered

But no one, not even the so-called “HIV-discoverers” Montagnier or Gallo, could plausibly explain why so few of the helper cells so important for the immune defence are “befallen” even in terminal AIDS-patients. Hence, they couldn’t explain the breakdown of the immune system with just the HIV-Theory. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* already called attention to this paradox in 1985 (Pahwa et al., 1985, p. 8198-8202). That same year, Montagnier admitted in *Annals of Internal Medicine* that the virus alone could not be responsible for AIDS but that co-factors were necessary. This is the standpoint still taken today. However, scientific journalism wasn’t interested in this point of view. It had already committed itself to the HIV-AIDS-Hypothesis.

Sociologist Steven Epstein analyzed how the leading scientific magazines reported on AIDS during this initial phase of understanding. He noticed that, between 1984 and 1986, the number of articles which, quoting Gallo’s *Science* publication, depicted the Virus-Hypothesis as a proven fact increased from three to 62 percent. “Expression of doubt or scepticism – let alone sup-

port for other hypotheses – were extraordinarily rare” (Epstein, 1996, p. 81-88).

In order to explain what caused AIDS, also Lawrence Altman trusted only one source: the CDC. Altman was one of the first generation of students of the Epidemic Intelligence Service (EIS), founded in 1951 by the CDC. The CDC saw itself confronted with the accusation of being “so fixated on contagious causes that other possible causes like chemicals or toxins were practically disregarded” (Culliton, 1976, p. 1025; House Subcommittee on Consumer Protection and Finance, 1976). Basically, the CDC was totally unsuitable as an “objective” source of information, yet all journalists blindly trusted it.

The CDC went to great lengths to promote a “spirit of loyalty” for the EIS-program. Leading scientific journalists were personally called by CDC-officials every once in a while to relate the newest data of some drug study or other – the conclusion always being a total success in the fight against AIDS. Altman, especially, received various scoops from the CDC-officials, which he completely relied on, and admitted being influenced by many years later. “He didn’t think it was his paper’s place to announce something that the CDC was not confident enough to publish,” Altman was quoted in *Science* (Nr. 257, 1992, p. 1033).

Gods, Graves, and Scholars

In order to make interesting stories out of formulas and equations, one needs kings and heroes, traitors and villains. Even scientific journalists make use of them. “First came God, then came Gallo,” proclaimed Flossie Wong-Staal, Gallo’s closest colleague and mistress, in the *Los Angeles Times* in 1986 (Cimons, 1986, p. 16). One year later, Sam Broder, head of the National Cancer Institute, was quoted by the *Washington Post* with the words “Einstein, Freud – I’d put him [Gallo] on that list like that, I really would” (Remnick, 1987, W 10).

Between 1984 and 1986, the number of articles which depicted the Virus-Hypothesis as a proven fact increased from three to 62 percent.

But Gallo wasn't the only one who almost drowned in praise. David Ho, initiator of the slogan "hit HIV hard and early", which became a worldwide doctrine for AIDS-treatment, was called "the long awaited Messiah of the AIDS-scene" by the *taz* on Christmas Day 1996. *TIME-Magazine* even celebrated David Ho on its cover as "Man of the Year", one day before New Years Eve, with the explanation that Ho's "genius" that "is evident in his gestures" had layed "forth clearly and succinctly some of the boldest yet most cogent hypothesis in the epic campaign against HIV". Shortly after that, the *Spiegel* also jumped on the bandwagon and proclaimed Ho "the shining new light in research because of his resolute optimism" (Johann Grolle: "Sieg über die Seuche?" *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 2/1997).

It was unfortunate for them, that Altman reported in the *New York Times*, only three years later, that AIDS-treatment had reached a turning point and that Ho's concept would be abandoned. It turned out that the anti-retroviral medications used were much too toxic.

They not only caused liver and kidney damage, but also had an immune suppressive effect. Basically, they were life threatening and fatal.

These controversies among the scientists were also dealt with by the renowned scientific magazines *nature* and *Science*. To mainstream journalism, *nature*-magazine means about as much as the oracle at Delphi did to the ancient Greeks. Unfortunately, much like the oracle at Delphi, those responsible for Nature someti-



"The probable cause of AIDS has been found." Press conference with Robert Gallo on April 23rd 1984.

mes take advantage of the naïveté of their subscribers. In early 1996, *nature*-publisher John Maddox publicized one of Ho's essays, wanting to prove once and for all that HIV is the only cause of AIDS.

Gruelling battle?

The retaliation came in November 1996, about seven weeks before Ho's great commendation by *taz*, *TIME*, *Spiegel*, etc. This time, the competing magazine *Science* published a study, which "knocked Ho's proof off its feet," as the journalists Kurt Langbein and Bert Ehgartner phrased it in their book "Das Medizinkartell (The Medical Cartel)" (Langbein/Ehgartner, 2002, p. 347). The study revealed no trace of the gruelling battle between HIV and the immune system taking place in the body that Ho had supposedly uncovered in *nature*.

This change of opinion among the AIDS-researchers did not disconcert the scientific journalists at all. The French journalist Djamel Tahy was one of the very few who divulged this information in his documentary "AIDS – The Doubt" which was aired on arte in 1996. In Germany, this program practically remained the only one in a sea of television shows that critically questioned the prevailing HIV-AIDS dogma.

The Nobel laureate in chemistry Kary Mullis says there is no reason to believe that all AIDS-associated diseases have the same origin

Mullis: “If Maddox really thinks that Ho’s paper really prove that HIV causes AIDS, then he shall head somewhere he wants and shoot himself. Because if he had no explanation before, why did he refuse all of my explanatory statements and alternative hypotheses? Why is Maddox, why is the entire world so narrow minded? If it took until 1995 to figure out what caused AIDS, then how could everyone have already known it for ten years? The facts are all uncovered now and if you take a closer look at them, you will see that HIV cannot be the cause of AIDS. There is no reason to believe that all AIDS-associated diseases have the same origin.”

Mullis says that AIDS – that represents a conglomerate of dozens of well-known diseases – could essentially be explained by (1) taking immune suppressive drugs, (2) receiving highly toxic immune suppressive antiretroviral compounds, and/or (3) malnutrition.

Disregarding, ignoring, avoiding

The mainstream journalists were also not interested in the controversies raised by the AIDS-experts because the AIDS-virus-story endorsed by Gallo and Heckler delivered the better headline: sex and death. For that, AIDS was propelled as an issue of fear, much like the Anthrax-hysteria which spread panic among the US-population after September 11th, 2001.

Sex and death? Even the ten-year-study conducted by Nancy Padian, published 1997 in *American Journal of Epidemiology*, did not reveal a single case in which a so-called HIV-negative individual became “positive” solely through sexual engagements with a “positive” partner (Padian, 1997, p. 350-357).

The Padian-study is deemed the most significant and lengthy examination in the US concerning the subject of sex and AIDS. It was thoroughly designed and performed by a scientist, who is held in great esteem even by orthodox scientists. When searching for the keyword “Padian N”, the National Library of Medicine (PubMed) finds 85 different studies, many of them published in established scientific magazines, such as *AIDS*, *Journal of Infectious Diseases* or *American Journal of Epidemiology*.

On the other hand, if you ask a scientific jour-

HOW AND WHEN DOES ONE GET AIDS?

Are AIDS-testing procedures reliable? The most important diagnostic tools of AIDS-medicine are antibody-tests, PCR-viral-load-tests, and the counting of CD4-cells. However these tests are all just “surrogate markers” - lab markers which are used as substitutes for real clinical symptoms, which would normally be utilized in diagnostics. Therefore, according to de Harven and other experts and according to Montagnier (“EM-shots showed no retroviral particles”), there is no foundation for using either the proteins as antigens in antibody-testing, nor the RNA to measure the viral load in a PCR-test.

Additionally, orthodox AIDS-research is turning the field of immunology upside down by telling antibody-positive individuals that they are suffering from a deadly disease while at the same time stating that antibodies protect against diseases. There are about 70 known factors, such as common flu, which can elicit a positive result on the antibody-tests. While relevant studies confirm that PCR-viral-load-tests are worthless in diagnosing AIDS. And the study “Surrogate End Points In Clinical Trials: Are We Being Misled?” succinctly states that measurements of CD4-cells “are as uninformative as a toss of a coin”.

Is AIDS transmitted by blood or semen? In 1995, a United States Republican Senator sent a letter to seven leading members of the medical establishment. In this letter he posed twelve critical questions concerning the complex subject of AIDS. His first question was “Where is the scientific evidence that proves AIDS is contagious?” No one was able to show him a documented case. As a matter of fact, the most thorough studies clearly show there is no proof that HIV is transmitted sexually. Concerning hemophiliacs, we are referred to the Darby-study, which investigated the death rates of HIV-positive and -negative hemophiliacs in England between 1985 and 1992. In late 1986, shortly before the approval of AZT, these patients were tested again. The HIV-positive group showed an increase in mortality, whereas the negative group did not. Based on this study, the AIDS orthodoxy concludes that HIV is responsible for the steep increase in deaths. However, this view misses the fact that the total death rate of hemophiliacs had been decreasing since the mid-60’s and only began to increase (at first slightly) around 1985, exactly the time that the HIV-tests were introduced. In this time the world learned to view HIV as AIDS, and AIDS as a death sentence – why, for example, many of those who had tested positive for HIV chose suicide. Additionally, everyone with a positive test was immediately treated as an AIDS-patient with highly toxic (test) drugs like HPA 23 (like Rock Hudson) or the cell-inhibiting antibiotic Eusaprim. After AZT was introduced in 1987 the death rate increased noticeably. It should also not be forgotten that blood plasma intended for hemophiliacs is freeze-dried before use, often for long periods of time. The virus, assuming it exists, would not be able to survive this. Even the CDC states that freeze “drying of HIV-infected human blood or other body fluids reduces the theoretical risk of environmental transmission to that which has been observed – essentially zero. Incorrect interpretation of conclusions drawn from laboratory studies have unnecessarily alarmed some people”.

nalist about the study, you will most likely not receive an answer. If you do get an answer it is usually a strange one. Alan Niederer, chief scientific editor of the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, answered that he “doubted Padian’s study was well conceived.” Unfortunately, this critical attitude, desirable in relation to orthodox AIDS-research, is not a stance at all, but a preconception. Because later, Niederer told us that he “had never heard of this study.”

Unmistakable result

This still leaves the objection open that, over all and despite this information, the reporting on the AIDS-problem was still sufficient and executed appropriately. To refute this, we perused seven differently oriented German newspapers and magazines- *Berliner Zeitung*, *FAZ*, *NZZ*, *Spiegel*, *SZ*, *Tagesspiegel* and *taz* – from January 1993 to October 2004 (*Berliner Zeitung* as of April 1st, 1994, *Tagesspiegel* as of April 16th, 1996).

Of the 60 reputable experts who criticised the HIV-Hypothesis only 0.135 percent were mentioned in the media

The result is unmistakable: altogether we counted more than 20,000 texts on the subject.

Of the 60 reputable experts who criticised the HIV-Hypothesis during that time, only nine were mentioned: among them Peter Duesberg in 20 articles related to AIDS and Kary Mullis in seven, which constitute only 0.135 percent of all reports about AIDS. Yet even in those few articles, the authors avoided confrontation with the arguments of the critics, such as the criticism of conventional AIDS-testing.

Hartmut Wewetzer wrote in his *Tagesspiegel* interview with Kary Mullis, the inventor of the Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR), “AIDS-tests, genetic fingerprinting, the Human Genome Project are all unthinkable without the PCR.” But he wasn’t interested in why Mullis thought the PCR – one of the most important tools for today’s AIDS-diagnosis – to be useless for AIDS-diagnostic purposes (*Tagesspiegel*, July 5th, 2000). When Mullis was interviewed by *SZ-Magazine* that same year, not one of the 32 questions he

was asked targeted his criticism of the PCR. “Is surfing dangerous?” is what they wanted to be explained.

The Rest is just Silence

Jörg Albrecht, chief scientific editor of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, told us that, ten years ago, he decided to „not bother with these speculations about AIDS anymore.” He added, “As far as that matter is concerned, you can consider me part of the medical establishment.” But why did the mainstream-critical *taz*, which had always been more devoted to alternative ways of thinking, follow in those same tracks? Its chief scientific editor, Wolfgang Löhr, admitted that he didn’t have a legitimate reason to reject Duesberg’s criticism. In fact, this criticism has been comprehensively written down and easily accessible for years, even printed in many books like “Inventing the AIDS Virus” (1996). And it was recently published in *Journal of Bioscience* under the title “The chemical bases of the various AIDS epidemics: recreational drugs, anti-viral chemotherapy and malnutrition” (Duesberg et al., 2003, p. 383-412).

“Two key ideas are deeply ingrained in our minds concerning the reporting about AIDS,” writes Michael Tracey, media scientist at the University of Colorado at Boulder. “What are buried inside the coverage of AIDS are two key fragments of our consciousness. First, there is the idea of plague I have already spoken of, but there is also the idea of cure, the fear of forces beyond our control alongside the rational optimism that sees in the triumph of science our ability to cure even the most brutal of illnesses. Indeed, so profound is our belief in the cures of science, the new secular theology of the 20th century, with its priesthood of scientists, that we construct any problem, grievance, pain, or fear in conceptual terms that not only allow us to seek the cure, but demand that we do so” (Tracey, 2001).

Evasive Maneuvers

It is not a question of persecution mania or sectarianism (even if the inquiring critics do get accused of this by the established medical journalists using these terms as a killer phras) if someone asks the simple question, contrary to the prevailing attitude, of why the media has sold the HIV-

AIDS-causality-theory as an established truth and why criticism including the intoxication-theory is suppressed.

Since the media makers avoid this question, they can't refute speculations and imputations with sound argumentation. For example, the allegation that we were dealing with a controlled deception. Especially the CDC, according to Red-Cross-official Paul Cumming, "needed an increasingly large epidemic to justify its existence" (*San Francisco Chronicle*, May 16th, 1994).

Earlier, the plague-seekers had supposedly "not put it past the retroviruses to do all sorts of evil things, especially the triggering of cancer, and had had to endure a lot of ridicule and countless defeats" (Halter, *Spiegel* Nr. 18/1986). Then came their saviour in the form of the HIV-AIDS-Theory. "All the old virus-hunters from the National Cancer Institute put up new signs on their doors, called themselves AIDS-researchers, and received about a billion dollars to start from the Reagan administration," recounts Kary Mullis (Mullis, 1998, p. 177).

Effective Antidote

Reputable critics of the HIV-Hypothesis, like Mullis, are primarily interested in clarifying the facts. Nevertheless, their theories are nourishment for those who believe in the global power of the pharmaceutical industry and claim that, with the help of the media, the industry has turned the disease AIDS into a hysteria, with the objective of selling huge amounts of expensive HIV-tests and medications with serious side effects, and then fighting the resulting negative effects with other medications.

The only effective journalistic means of tackling these conspiracy theories is clarification through investigation. Such investigations are well within the grasp of the scientific community since, although AIDS is a very complex subject, there are many open dialogues concerning the different perspectives among the scientists. Open discussion of such contradictory opinions is the best fuel for investigations.

The misery of the scientific journalists lies in the resistance to criticism. Perhaps this resistance developed so easily among the media because the responsible medical editors blindly trusted the

HIV-supporters and ignored the criticism so frequently posed. They continued to ignore it even after Robert Gallo admitted in 1994 that HIV could not be the primary cause of Kaposi's sarcoma, the AIDS-defining disease in the US and Europe, but that Poppers could.

Back then, not only in the *New York Times*, but also in the *Spiegel*, *Die Zeit* and *NZZ* medical opinions were controlled by physicians who tend to rely on the views of the medical establishment. Many of them lacked knowledge of the vast "scientific netherworld" of microbiology, as *The New Yorker* called it. "To an inordinate extent what drives the coverage of a problem such as AIDS are debased news values, and an extraordinary level of scientific illiteracy on

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the part of the profession of journalism," as Tracey phrased it. "The complex becomes the simple, the imagined the real."

"Subliminally Pornographic"

In other word, the scientific journalists suffer from a fundamental problem: dealing with uncertainty. In striving to provide their audience with simple answers, the journalists reduced overly complex AIDS-issues to simple, mostly causal patterns of explanation. Hence, they created the superstition that, with "safer Sex", AIDS could be defeated.

This view seems morally justifiable (and immune to criticism) because it sides with the "life-savers" and laments about the western world not utilizing the medications produced by its pharmaceutical industry to contain the spread of AIDS in Africa. To be truly effective, AIDS-relief requires a drastically different approach, such as setting up a long-term nutritional program. The fondness of journalism to use the contrast between normality and catastrophe for entertainment value has already been mentioned. It is sad that even scientific journalism falls into this trap.

To this, media researcher Michael Tracey writes that, when it comes to AIDS, the media coverage satisfies "a certain kind of news value that

is ignorant but loves to wallow in gore, and that readily has the ear of a public which is fascinated by the bizarre, the gruesome, the violent, the inhuman, the fearful" (Tracey, 2001).

Spiegel-author Wilhelm Bittorf described in 1987 the well functioning efficiency of this sensationalistic journalism, used even by *Der Spiegel* itself: "Whatever happens, the public will never get tired of stories about this epidemic – the subject is subliminally pornographic, terrible and erotic at the same time. Even the worst environmental catastrophes are less interesting than a contagious doom in the erogenous area." ■

Translation: Amina Baldwin

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