

## Beitrag am 22.2.22, FUE: Water Grabbing and Tesla (Dorothea Härlin)

When we speak about water today, we only can focus on some important aspects. But when you once start to fight for water you will never end because water flows everywhere. I started more than 20 years ago when I was inspired by Maude Barlow and in all these years I learned so many aspects of water - it's an endless fountain of knowledge.

Today I will focus on water grabbing. Many are using this term for the scandal that Global Players and Governments are buying huge tracts of land just to steal the water resources underneath: the groundwater and even fossil water that is geologically located in undisturbed places.

Today I will focus on another aspect of water grabbing. I haven't the time to delve more deeply in details about big companies who are poisoning our groundwater, rivers and lakes just pouring their wastewater into our wastewater channels or just into nature.

In the first case, we the tax payers, will have to pay that our local waste water treatment companies clean their poisoning products. But in most cases it's even much worse: they pour products that can't be cleaned through normal waste water treatment and so they poison our drinking water. Or they pour it directly into nature like for example industrial agriculture industry.

Or they fill millions of liters of our groundwater, paying nearly nothing for it, into plastic bottles, carry it all over the world and then sell it for high prices. You know about whom I am speaking.

But there are also others who are constructing big factories without caring about the effect to water and nature. One of them is **Elon Musk**. I now will concentrate on his **Giga factory Tesla** which he constructed at the border of Berlin in Grünheide. I am actually personally very much engaged against this together with many others in citizen's initiatives, ecological NGOs, experts in geology, and many more.

This factory for e-cars, which we don't need, is finished for production. With the permission of the Government of Brandenburg he could cut thousands of trees in water protection area. This is bad enough, but the real scandal is that Musk applied to build a giant warehouse, which was approved. It was only after approval that it became clear that Musk really wanted to build the world's largest battery factory in this warehouse! It's only after initial permits that Musk made this clear and asked for permission in a 13 600 pages text. To make matter worse, he was never forced by our government to build this warehouse with proper soil protection plans in mind. This means that poisonous elements generated out of battery production might leak into the groundwater there, which is sandy and very porous.

I have no time to tell you the whole story how Musk managed to persuade politicians to think that he is bringing paradise into their region and how they gave him until now 19 partial permits for the construction in this very special water protected area in the driest region of Germany.

**But until now, politicians didn't dare to give him the final permission.** Thanks to all people in citizen's initiatives, ecologic NGOS, many experts like geologists, limnologists and many more who have long fought against this crime. And it's water that until now has stopped him.

Elon Musk had planned to start his production of Tesla cars in June of 2021. He announced this time-line in October, then again in December, then beginning of this year. But now he canceled his next meeting with the Government of Brandenburg in March because the minister of environment of Brandenburg had to admit that he cannot yet promise a date when Elon Musk will get his final permission. This minister, who belongs to the Green Party, who had up to this point given him 19 partial permits, is now getting cold feet. Even the minister of economy, most friend of this Tesla project, has not been able to place pressure any more on the other ministers like he did before. They are waiting for a court decision and are in the meantime experiencing more and more pressure by the critical media as the whole scandal is increasingly publicized in the whole region and in Berlin.

I would like to thank all the activists who never gave up in all their actions and analyses. We, the Berlin Water Table joined them rather late when we finally became aware that our drinking water in whole Berlin is threatened by this factory. We as political activists, I must admit, aren't the experts for all these details but thanks to our referendum in 2011 when we initiated the remunicipalisation of Berlin Water know how to bring this scandal into public so the media became aware what is happening here. So we invited all activists to a first telephone conference and since then we came together in what we call the Berliner Wassertafel ([www.wassertafel.org](http://www.wassertafel.org)).

And we started two very spectacular actions: one in August in front of the Brandenburg Tor. The next one we did 9<sup>th</sup> of December when we sent an open letter to Mrs. Giffey (now mayor of Berlin SPD), Mrs. Jarasch (now Minister of Environment, Green Party) and Mr. Lederer, (Left Party) hoping that they put water on top of their agenda while they were still negotiating their coalition. But none of them until now answered, they didn't even send us a confirmation that they received our letter.

Before I come to an end, I must focus on this second scandal in the whole drama. The players are not only Mr. Musk and other Global Players but also the politicians. They are allowing the destruction of nature, to steal and poison our water giving the permission for this and other destructive projects, just for profit reasons. Water doesn't know frontiers, so it's not only to blame the Government of Brandenburg but also the Berlin Government because the drinking water in the whole region is threatened by Tesla. Until today and for a long while the Berlin Government has told us that the Tesla Factory is the business of Brandenburg, not theirs. How ridiculous, since experts have long proven that Berlin water will be polluted by Tesla, and the big amount of water needed for the production will steal the drinking water from all citizens in this very dry region.

I am sorry I couldn't talk about all the other scandals like Coca Cola in Lüneburg, Kali und Salz in the river Weser and many more water grabbing projects.

To come to an end: After many years as a water activist I came to the conclusion: Against the coalition of big global players and politicians of all political parties it's mainly on us, the very

normal citizens without interest in high profits nor in political careers who must save our water! For this we need many experts but only in combination with loud public actions we might wake up the media and finally our politicians.

We all know: there is no life on our planet without water, it's on us to act, we have no other choice!

PS.: Sending this text today, the 8<sup>th</sup> day of a dreadful war in Ukrainia, while the Russian Army is bombing water tubes so people have no drinking water and energy in their houses , I am becoming aware in another brutal the importance of water for all of us and that it is possible to use the cutting off of water as a weapon .

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