

[Translation from the German]
"Von Mikrowellen verseuchte Umgebung"
Richtfunk schneidet Schneisen in Wälder

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«Environment contaminated by Microwaves»
Directional Radio Beams cut Breaks into Forests

By Michael Lohmeyer

VIENNA. "Our environment is contaminated by microwaves. At present, the consequences are largely unexplored; however, observations of trees offer dire foreboding." With these words, the German electrical engineer and physicist Wolfgang Volkrodt—for decades he was active in the Siemens [AG] research department and now works independently—enters the discussion surrounding microwaves.

Volkrodt: "One thing right up front: Microwave ovens are not a source of danger. They are subject to stringent controls. The emissions of such devices are quite safe, as long as one does not stick his hand in there." There are 900,000 microwave ovens in Austria. Their owners have been made uncertain by the reservations regarding their safety, stated by EG Commissioner Karel van Miert, and by the halt of microwave oven sales by Köck.

According to current knowledge, problems arise only indirectly. An example would be bacteria surviving in food that has not been fully cooked.

"The real danger," reports Volkrodt, "emanates from the directional radio links of the Post Office and from radar installations." During investigations lasting several years, he has documented in Germany, Switzerland and Austria that directional radio links cut actual [longitudinal] breaks into forests. Similarly, forested areas that are exposed to the sweeping action of radar waves are visibly sick at a higher rate. Volkrodt even goes so far as to fully blame radar for the damage to vegetation in the Fichtel Mountains in Saxony. "Ever since the electronic listening posts along the former boundary with the Zone² have disappeared, the condition of the trees is visibly improving," Volkrodt reports.

During his travels through Austria, the scientist who happened upon this problem through a number of inexplicable incidents during his work at Siemens, identified the Gaisberg mountain at Salzburg as the area most heavily burdened [by microwaves] in our entire Alpine Republic. Gerhard Schlager, area forest technician of Salzburg's³ municipal authorities, confirms: "Areas of high microwave exposure

¹ 'The Press,' Austrian daily paper

² Colloquialism reflecting the refusal by many Germans to acknowledge the now defunct German Democratic Republic (GDR); to them it remained the [occupied Eastern] 'Zone' instead.

³ 'Mozartstadt', i. e., Mozart City'

exhibit high degrees of forest damage." Salzburg is the receiver hub [i.e., focus point] for 150 directional radio links.

Although the provincial government had promised funding, an investigation of this phenomenon by the university never took place: The establishment of a testing facility has confronted the relevant institutions with so far insurmountable problems. Schlager: "The microwave is certainly one of many damaging factors. We do not know the extent of its magnitude."

Wolfgang Volkrodt explains the origin of the forest damage by pointing out that microwaves cause the cell membranes of trees to resonate and thereby interrupt the water circulation. Also, the balance of electrically charged particles is disturbed. Still, the extent to which analogies to humans may be established is unclear.

[wc 510]

[Translation from the German]
Die Katalysator Story

Inset in *Die Presse* article

The Catalytic Converter Story

Since it has now been established that the trees in New Zealand, Hawaii, etc., despite the absence of air pollution there, die just as they do here, and that, on the other hand, the forest along freeways with high traffic densities begins to 'grow wild' due to the fertilizer effect of the nitrogen oxide contained in the exhaust emissions, what was the purpose of the entire catalytic converter circus until now?

As most people would know, the automotive catalytic converter uses platinum metals in order to effect a kind of after burning of the exhaust gases prior to their expulsion into the air. Approximately 80 percent of the worldwide consumption of platinum metals come from the mines of South Africa. Due to a lack of demand, platinum prices remained at rock bottom for a long time. This upset South Africa's white mine owners and apartheid government. The solution was to artificially accelerate the demand [for the metal]. This was accomplished with the greatest ease with the Germans, who are chronically afflicted with their 'forest death allergy.' Participating players in the platinum business were corporations such as DEGUSSA¹. Additionally, our forest damage researchers served as its vicarious agents who used their air pollution theories in order to accelerate the public urge to save our beautiful forests with the aid of the automotive catalytic converter. The board of directors and major collaborators in the advisory committee of the research project 'Forest Death'² were provided by the nuclear research centers at Karlsruhe and Jülich. This allows the speculation that once again the nuclear lobby, which is by now well known as having been involved in all kinds of dubious business transactions, has exerted plenty of influence in order to sway our forest damage researchers in the direction of air pollution contaminants. For the investigation of other damaging influences such as the microwaves of directional radio and radar, for example, no money was available. The nuclear lobby would have been quite embarrassed if, instead of the toxins introduced by air pollution, the effect of electromagnetic radiation had been established as the culprit in the forest deaths. This would have caused a repeated intensification of the fear of radiation among the general population, and the result would have been a repeat of massive demonstrations at the perimeter walls of nuclear power plants.

The manipulation of the public in the FRG during the past several years by agents of the South African apartheid regime, German platinum processors and their willing puppets in government circles ranks on the same level as the stultification campaign of a previous Honecker-GDR state.

Incidentally, the origin of the catalytic converter technology is in no way related to forest damages. In the United States toward the end of the fifties, and later also in Japan, the search was on for technological solutions for the reduction of the incredible smog proliferation occurring as a result of too many automotive emissions in conurbation centers such as those of California's large cities. In those days the large-displacement engines of American automobiles were gobbling approximately 20 to 30 liters of gasoline per 100 kilometers. Meanwhile, American and Japanese cars are consuming far less than half of those amounts. and the total amount of exhaust fumes in those areas half been cut down to more than half of their former value. Worldwide there exists no clear evidence that the automotive

¹ German refiners and purveyors of precious metals.

² *Waldsterben*

catalytic converter alone has caused a decided change in urban smog production and forest deaths. In fact, there is growing concern that the few milligrams of platinum that a catalytic converters emits into the air along with the hot exhaust gases during its useful life span are more responsible for the drastic increase of incidence of lung disease than the smoking, which meanwhile is frowned upon at all levels.

In the story of the catalytic converter, the only fact that is clear and does not belong in the realm of fables and deliberate public stultification is the truth that it was an incredible source of profits for the South African platinum mines and the German processing industry, and that it continues to be so.

The public in the [former] GDR demands that the parties responsible for the outrages of the past forty years be taken to account in full view of the public. What, however, will be done in our sphere in order to uncover the deliberate manipulation of the public in connection with the hubbub surrounding the catalytic converter and to openly condemn such manipulation? [Probably] just as little as was done after the uncovering of the horse trading by German shipbuilders in the passing of submarine construction blueprints to South Africa!

[excerpted from the journal]

*Mensch und Technik*³

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[wc 808]

³ 'Man and Technology'

[Translation from the German]
Der Wald stirbt am Electrosmog

[from:]
*auto-illustrierte*¹ 2/92

The Forest is dying from 'Electrosmog'² [or Electromagnetic Contamination]

In December of last year, the electronic mass media and large segments of the daily press were disseminating the news that our forests were more unwell than ever before, and that further measures against the automobile were urgently required. Not true. *auto-illustrierte* tells it as it is.

By Franz Glinz

Only a few short years ago, there was total agreement between environmentalists, forest rangers, green know-it-alls³ and certified forest damage researchers: The automobile and its emissions are the main culprits in the death of our forests. Now, the 'Sanasilva Forest Damage Report'⁴ suddenly tells it differently. It states with scientific aloofness: "The results of the [Swiss] national research program concerning the three investigated forest masses of Lägern, Alptal and Davos do not allow the recognition of a correlation, either in time or space, between the thinning of tree tops and [the degree of] air pollution." [This constitutes] Already almost an acquittal for the automobile. Still, we see the resurfacing of other possible causes that countries and science alike would rather prefer to keep quiet.

The automobile was a convenient scapegoat. Electrosmog is not. This, however, does not keep some German engineers of high credibility from bringing it up again at this time.

The reason for this is that Wolfgang Volkrodt, who lives in a wooded development at Bad Neustadt, made a strange discovery: On the north side of his home, the fir trees have been sickly for years. In contrast, the same tree species on the south side of the home is doing fine. Volkrodt mused whether exhaust emissions and acid rain could occur in such a selective fashion. Together with another engineer, the 66-year old Siemens⁵ retiree started an elaborate measuring project, [the results of] which firmed his suspicions. The fir trees are under direct exposure to not only the radar waves of a military installation 20 kilometers away, but also to the overlaying directional radio beams of the postal telecommunications. By the healthy trees behind the house, however, the measurements confirmed 'radio silence.'

Volkrodt told the weekly *Wirtschaftswoche*⁶: "I traveled through the mountains of the Fichtelgebirge, the Black Forest, the Bavarian Forest and the Salzburger Land--and in every location

¹ *auto-illustrierte*: Swiss auto magazine

² Translator's note: The German term *Electrosmog* is a recent compound word; it attempts to conjure up a visual image of the omnipresence of invisible electromagnetic emissions originating in devices ranging from electric high-tension lines to radar and radio transmitters. In the absence of a similar term in the English language, the use of the original, with 'electromagnetic contamination' as an alternate, is suggested.

³ refers to members of the environmentally protective Green Party.

⁴ *Sanasilva* ('healthy forest') *Waldschadenbericht* 1991.

⁵ Siemens AG, multinational electrical components manufacturer

⁶ 'Economy Week'

where military observation stations or PTT⁷ radio towers are subjecting the forest to radiation, the tree damage cannot be overlooked."

"Of course, I also traveled around Switzerland. The situation is exactly the same," Volkrodt confirmed to *auto-illustrierte*. "There have already been pertinent investigations in Switzerland, but such reports normally end up in some drawer. What's more, the certified people in the forest research agencies are unable to grasp the meaning behind the term 'electrosmog.' Automobiles, and even their emissions, can be seen, while 'electrosmog' cannot. That the Post [Office] in the countries concerned is playing this thing down and suppresses it as much as they can, that's clear. What do you think will happen, when one day thousands of forest owners manage to file legal compensation claims against the PTT."

It is a fact that in Switzerland, too, there are very many short, medium and long wave transmitters, television transmitters, radio transmitters and military early warning systems—in the seventies and eighties they shot out of the ground like mushrooms. An especially high concentration of these 'wave spitters' is located in the Cantons of Wallis, Graubünden and Tessin—all of them locations in which the largest degree of forest damage has been observed for years.

Not a word of this is found in the Sanasilva Report. Instead, there is the somewhat astonished statement: "On the Davos mountain range, the exposure to emissions is generally low; however, the rate of needle loss is high. Conversely, on the Lägern in the densely settled Mittelland, the exposure to emissions is comparatively high; the degree of tree top thinning, however, is small."

In general, segments of the new report by the Swiss forest experts are plagued by uncertainties. To cite from the report: "An explanation of the causes of the observed phenomena is not possible with current investigative methods." Or: "Most of the trees exhibiting visible causes for the thinning at their tops are repressed specimens with stunted tops. The climate (wind, frost, snow burden) ranks second in terms of importance of the known origins." Not a word about the automobile.

The report also states that in [the town of] Flims, which is subject to relatively low pollution levels, the negative development of the forest condition has continued. In the [environmentally] heavily burdened [town of] Zofingen on the N1⁸, however, "a comparatively positive picture is being observed."

The fact that generally very little is known is illustrated by the following sentence from the report: "The observations during the years of 1986 to 1988 took place within a time period which is roughly equivalent to 1 to 2 percent of the life span of a fir tree. It is not permissible to make this the basis for conclusions of universal validity."

Of course, the Sanasilva Report contains, somewhere in the back, the admonition that all measures to reduce air pollution should be continued. In this, the authors are quite right, of course.

Still, they will slowly have to get used to taking this uncomfortable matter of 'electrosmog' seriously; after all, at the Forest Research Institute at Birmensdorf, there has been [a] secret 'electrosmog' research [project] going on for several years. And the German engineer Volkrodt perceives a new danger to the forest brewing in the field of microwaves: the digitized mobile telephone system Natel D: "An area-blanketing radio system in the extreme short wave range—and the shorter the wavelength, the more damage to the trees."

Perhaps the 'communications community without borders' of the Electronic Age will encounter boundaries of sorts after all.

⁷ PTT = Postal, Telephone and Telegraph relay towers

⁸ National Autoroute (freeway)

[photo caption:]

Antennas as tree parasites: the so-called 'electrosmog' of high tension transmission lines plus radio stations and radio antennas have an effect on the forest.

[END]

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