



## ‘People who live in Germany will have to stop clenching their fist!’

The occurrence of moral panics and angst-ridden responses have been on our mind over the last decade. I have chosen one article of the BILD-newspaper to show that media plays an important role in generating this public punitiveness.

‘The claim tends to be that public punitive policies do not originate in any real groundswell of public demand; that the public are not truly committed to these policies; or else that such commitment as does exist has been artificially aroused and exited by media images and campaigns that misinterpret both crime and public sentiment. Public support for punitive policies is, on this account, the fabricated result of manipulative political and rhetoric and rabble-rousing popular press.’ (Garland 2000: 353)

Garland summarises in these two sentences what I want to show by analysing the article. I will show how they get the attention of their addressees, which section of the population they want to bewitch, what lecture they tell and what rhetorical expressions they use to reach their aims.

The article I chose was published in the 'BILD' newspaper, which is regarded as a German boulevard newspaper. The BILD newspaper is often criticized because of its missing reliability and the fact that it seriously damages its credibility for entertainment purposes. Already the design of the page indicates a sensation orientation. Big headings and large-scale pictures are used, moreover striking catch-lines and conspicuous colours. According to Axel Springer AG market research 2007 just 4% of the 'BILD'-readers have a higher education, 37% are craftsmen and 34% are clerical workers. The target group is according to that research not the class of managers, professionals or intellectual people, but the working class.

Already from the heading the reader knows that Koch will hold a severe lecture for a minority of people, whose behaviour is not tolerated by the majority. A politician would not have the courage to announce loudly how self-confident and prestigious citizens have to behave. Why should he have the right to tell respected locals what they will or won't have to do in Germany? The reader doesn't identify himself with the addressees, he rather wants to find out who disturbs the life of an ordinary citizen. Thus the heading fulfils its task: it tells in a few words what the text is driving at. The first interview question already draws a picture of Germany that I want to have a closer look at. Germany is illustrated like a house, that belongs to a landlord and should be safe. This is a funny picture of a country in the decade of globalisation and I would say a far too simple one. People experience the world as being insecure and uncertain nowadays. Although social life is much safer relating to crime a lot of citizens are concerned for their safety (Altheide 2000). Members of the public express their dissatisfaction with the system which doesn't seem to be able to allay the fear. In view of the powerlessness, politicians are blamed and a demand for action is rising. 'The feeling 'that something must be done' and 'someone must be blamed' increasingly find political representation and fuels political action' (Garland 2000: 368-369). Baumann mentions already the willingness of political actors and moral entrepreneurs to promise to bring back a feeling of safety.

'In an ever more insecure and uncertain world the withdrawal into the safe-haven of territoriality is an intense temptation; and so the defence of the territory – the 'safe home' – becomes the pass-key to all doors which one feels must be locked to stave of the ...threat to spiritual and material comfort..' (Bauman 1998:77).

The assault in Munich is in our newspaper article mentioned by Koch to be the reason for insecurity. With expressive words like 'breathtaking brutality that is not particular anymore' he gives the impression that the criminal acts are getting more violent. Moreover he claims that these kind of assaults became a habit and so are more likely to happen, although statistics show that crime rates are falling. He names crime as the reason of the insecure feeling in Germany - something simple

that is visible - a visible enemy that we can fight against. He reduces the complex problems of politics that have more to do with globalisation, changing conditions of the market, economic crisis and difficult conditions of employment to a crime problem.

It is also interesting what kind of crime he chose to make it the patsy of the problems. He chose a violent crime of two foreign youth who assaulted an old retired person. Why did he pick out the crime risk of old people as the central theme? Why didn't he choose the attack of an asylum centre or the crime that happens in the bureaus of higher status white people?

I think he chose an assault, because he knows that the police is more successful in solving violent crimes than property crimes (Reiner 2007). He probably chose a white old man because he uses media to serve the ordinary German upper class' interests in gaining goods. Some things will be punished, others not. If Koch would win the battle of gaining goods that Marx describes already in 1859 he could represent strongly his order (Marx 1859). In this order young foreign youth would not get away with things, but probably white upper class speculators in bureaus would. He puts the crime that can just be committed by foreigners in the middle of the political stage.

In this respect it is maybe good to mention that Koch came up with this interview just a few days before the election. Certainly he wanted to make his campaign palatable to people of the middle and upper class to see their benefits ensured with his election victory.

Koch says that we shall learn moral courage from the incident and to link our arms for others and to run for help. Moral courage is defined by Meyer as an act of defending human and democratic values and the personal integrity of particularly other people even in situations where we have to face personal disadvantages (Meyer 2004). Koch delimits moral courage to this particular event and loses the sight of the big picture. It can be that moral courage in this situation means to defend the old man or to run for help, but I think moral courage also means to claim democratic values and the personal integrity of foreign youth and give them equal opportunities. In my view the failure of the society in doing so is in many cases the root of violent behaviour.

In the next passage Koch underscores again that he is 'absolutely not interested in the background' of the offenders. There is no interest in analyses of crime patterns or the possible causes of crime. I agree with Goldson, that 'there is no escape from the conclusion that separating analyses of and responses to social exclusion, is not only intellectually and morally bankrupt, it is imprudent and impractical' (Goldson, 2001). I think Koch means with 'a strange sociological understanding' approaches like the youth offending philosophies that attribute juvenile offending and other troublesome behaviours to deeper needs deriving from underlying psychological and social failures. He shares the ethos of penal rationales that offenders first and foremost have to take

responsibility for what they do and should be punished. The focus shall lay on the offence and the respond shall tackle the nature of the offence rather than the individual needs of the offender.

Apart from the impression that Koch starts insulting foreign people in saying 'these are the manners in a civilized country' as if they came from an uncivilized country and don't know how to behave I think this is a good example to show what Durkheim meant when he said '...crime is necessary, it is linked to the social conditions of life...' (Durkheim 1895). We are related to the world and I would go to such length that we initially know who we are through politics, ideas, images, concepts and legal forms. Koch shapes ideas how a German citizen should behave ('behaving ordinary and not clenching the fist') and uses the assault against the old man to show how you should not behave as a German and eventually who in his sense belongs to the Germans.

Interesting is also Koch's Interpretation of the crime statistics. It is a fact that the number of foreign offenders in the statistics is disproportionate to the number of foreign people in the country. But again he does not mention complex coherencies, for example that crime of foreigners is controlled more intensively. Melossi noticed already the tendence of countries which host migrants to hold them down, exclude them and constrain them. He actually realizes transnational movements nowadays and sees a 'new Europe' in the future that can be developed similarly to the 'new world' that immigrants created in America. Given the fact that Germany accommodated between 1978 and 2001 in absolute numbers more immigrants than Canada or Australia his associations are not farfetched. Relating the numbers of immigrants it is a country of immigration. In Melossis opinion foreigners have skills, conditions and a lifestyle that fit very good to this universalism. They are relatively free of national bondages and can offer their manpower flexible. Not so Koch. He doesn't want Germany to be a country of immigration like Canada or Australia. Koch does not want many cultures to meet and form a new culture together. In such a conception the strengths of foreigners like Melossi assumed them to be become unimportant just as the need for openness and tolerance.

Now I want to focus on the phrasing of the article. Koch uses certain words to load his speech with expressiveness. I just take the expression 'zero tolerance' as one example and explain the origin and development of the words.

'Zero tolerance' is a term which reflects the trend to take drastic measures against offenders. In 1990 the police of New York City came up with some new strategies to fight against disorder and crime. The relatively simple message of the campaign was to 'crack down on crime' and to 'clean up' the

areas. The police paid more attention to fare dodging, public drinking, urination, low level incivilities, disturbing the peace, vagrancy, public begging and so on (Jones, Newburn 2004: 131). New York's police governor Bratton applied for police brutality and aggressive police arrest in subways and to the streets, all with the ulterior motive of disorder reduction (Taylor 2001: 93). These ideas and most of all the term 'zero tolerance' was relatively quickly transferred to other countries in Europe. It was used by many politicians without knowing if it matches to the linguistic and cultural categories of their country. The term 'zero tolerance' has been used for a wide range of different practises and policy strategies, but often there remained no definite conceptual definitions (Jones, Newburn 2004: 124-131). Most politicians do not even know the concrete content of the 'zero tolerance' policies that were implemented in New York. 'Zero tolerance' has remained more rhetorical. It were rather the ideas, terminologies and ideologies than policies and practises that were copied. Politicians used the term 'zero tolerance' for discourses and campaigns but less for policing (Jones, Newburn 2004, De Maillard 2005).

I assume that Koch doesn't know either the policing strategies that lie behind this word. He says: 'Zero Tolerance for violence has to start from the very beginning and has to be part of our integration policy.' I can't imagine how the 'zero tolerance' approach can be a part of an integration policy. By all means he relinquishes to give background information. It seems to be more a myth about tough policies with which he wants to encircle his speech.

Through the whole discourse Koch draws a picture of a dangerous threat to a fearful public and in the end he comes up with prison as the unproblematic solution to crime. In the last years the prison population in Germany rose immensely which could give enough reason to question the current reliance on a policy that fails answering crime in an alternative way. Koch distinguishes the reality of prison as an instrument of pain delivery. He constructs prison as a place lacking in real punishment and ignores its damage. Mason noticed already that prison is described by reporters as being a 'soft touch' to criminals:

'Through a discourse of dangerousness delivered to a fearful public, prison is represented as an institution failing to contain society's evil, who, in the news media at least, luxuriate in an hotel-like environment with rights and privileges out of kilter with their victims and victims' families.' (Mason 2006: 263)

The 'luxury in prison alludes to television, computer games, magazines and newspapers in the rooms, posters on the walls and the privilege to use a gym. Regarding the negative effects of incarceration on the mental development of prisoners the comparison of prison with a 'luxury hotel' seem to be quite weird to me.

Wacquant warns, that the over-reporting of violent crime as well as the media construction of prison have led to a remarkable policy formation towards a penal management. The welfare regulation of poverty was replaced by a penal management. Social assistance was removed and cases are managed via courts, police and correctional systems (Wacquant 2002). I would integrate the Koch-Interview as an exemplary medium for generating this movement. The danger that goes along with such announcements is fortunately realised by a number of experts of the criminal justice system, who set off an avalanche of insurrection about Koch's interview in Germany.

Media is a platform for public discourse, which means that statements are not just put on the table and ebb away, they are left up to the listeners to interpret and answer to it. The reaction can turn out different than the author planned it to be and the outcome can correspondingly be different than he intended it to be. The Koch Interview was answered critically in 'quality' newspapers, which draw a wider picture, include analyses and background information. I also put a translation of one of these in the attachment. It would be interesting to analyse these articles, to show that expert views are included and how they exposed Koch's interview as being a 'dangerous' campaign – dangerous because of the populist elements and facile ideas that can't answer the complex problems of a youth criminal justice system.

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## Attachment

<http://www.bild.de/BILD/news/politik/2009/01/06/roland-koch-interview/altas-bild-interview/gibt-es-immer-noch-zu-viele-junge-kriminelle-auslaender.html> (January 21th, 3:13 pm)

### Translation

# **BILD-interview with Hessen's prime minister Roland Koch 'People who live in Germany will have to stop clenching their fist!'**

05.01.2009 - 11:59 pm

By NIKOLAUS BLOME

**BILD:** Mr prime minister, don't we have to question whether the security of a German citizen is still guaranteed in our own country in view of the assault of Munich.

**Roland Koch:** The pictures of this assault show a breathtaking brutality. But outbursts of violence are regrettably not particular anymore. If this still becomes a habit, a feeling of insecurity will be spread in Germany.



Talkes turkey: Hessen's prime minister: Roland Koch (49, CDU)

**BILD: What does Munich's case teach us?**

**Koch:** Do have moral courage, don't accept that rules are broken! But this moral courage includes solidarity of others, who link their arms with others or run for help. The essential question is: Which things do we acquiesce that are done by a small part of extremely violence-prone youth who often come from a foreign background?

**BILD: The victim of Munich was attacked explicitly as a ,German'. There is a category 'xenophobic background' among grievous bodily harm. Do we need a category 'German-xenophobic background'?**

**Koch:** I absolutely don't care from which background rowdies come from. Violence remains violence. We have had long enough a strange sociological understanding for groups that as an ethnic minority consciously act violent. People who live in Germany have to behave ordinary and will have to stop clenching their fist. These are the manners in a civilised country.

**BILD: Which statements about the actual state of integration can be made when the number of young foreigners according to statistics is recognizably higher than the proportion of society?**

**Koch:** There are too many young criminal foreigners. Nobody can hide himself behind a 'migration-status'. Zero Tolerance for violence has to start from the very beginning and has to be part of our integration policy. Due to a multicultural blindness recently a behaviour was tolerated that can lead meanwhile to highly explosive aggressions between groups. We have to lose certain lifelong illusions. The German position in the integration policy has sadly not have been made clear for a long time.

**BILD: What do you mean with ,German Position'?**

**Koch:** Germany is not a typical country of immigration like Canada or Australia for example. Here not many cultures meet and form a new culture together. In Germany there is a Christian occidental culture since centuries. Foreigners who don't accept our norms are out of place here. They can't expect that we meet us somewhere in the middle. The basic rules of manners and behaviour are not negotiable.

**BILD: Would you advice the victim of Munich to act in the same way next time?**

**Koch:** We all have to tell him, that he acted right. He looked closely. And if a lot of people look closely we all are not threatened so extremely anymore. The government has to give a clear signal. Condemned offenders between the age of 18 and 21 should not be treated with a 'sympathy pedagogy' and have to be incarcerated regularly. They will make jokes about their accommodation in the 'state-hotel' afterwards. They have to feel the prison to have an effect.



<http://www.tagesschau.de/inland/jugendkriminalitaet56.html> (January 21th 2010 1:22pm)

The screenshot shows the tagesschau.de website interface. The main headline reads: "Hessens Ministerpräsident kritisiert Richter Koch will Jugendstrafrecht auch bei Kindern". Below the headline, there is a sub-headline: "Zwei Wochen vor der Landtagswahl in Hessen legt Ministerpräsident Roland Koch in seinem Wahlkampfthema Nummer eins - dem Umgang mit kriminellen Jugendlichen - noch einmal nach. In der 'Bild am Sonntag' forderte er nun, das Jugendstrafrecht in Ausnahmefällen auch bei unter 14-Jährigen anzuwenden." A quote from Koch is visible: "Wir wollen keine Schnellschüsse, aber wir müssen zur Kenntnis nehmen, dass es eine sehr aggressive Kriminalität einer sehr kleinen Gruppe von Menschen unter 14-Jährigen." The article is dated 13.01.2010. The website also features a search bar, navigation menu, and various news sections like "Deutschland", "Ausland", "Wirtschaft", "Klima", "Regional", "Wahlarchiv", "Wetter", "Multimedia", "Livestream", "tagesschau 16:00 Uhr", "tagesschau24", and "Letzte Sendung tagesschau 12:00 Uhr".

Hessen's prime minister criticizes judges

## Koch does want the juvenile law for children



[Prime minister Koch does take the next step: Now he demands for the implementation of the juvenile law for children under the age of 14.

Two weeks before the Landtag-election in Hessen Koch takes the next step regarding his election campaign number one 'the handling of youth crime'. In the newspaper 'BILD am Sonntag' he demands for the implementation of the juvenile law for under 14 year old children in exceptional cases.

'We do not want to make snapshots, but we have to realise, that there is a very aggressive delinquency among a very small group of people under the age of 14. Often adults even use these youth and rely on their criminal irresponsibility.' said Koch in the newspaper. His suggestion: 'In exceptional cases elements of the juvenile law could be used for this target group.' Another answer would be a harsher education by the youth office.

## ***Koch considers the judgements to be too mild***

The CDU-politician also focused on the judiciary. He blamed the judges to be often too mild. 'I sometimes wonder how youth-judges decide although they still should govern the instruments of harshness' said Koch. 'The judges, who are the only ones who can give punishment do not handle this instrument self-confident. To give mild punishments, they impose the juvenile law on 20-year-olds, who otherwise as well want to be treated as adults.' This would be a wrong signal. 'These youth are afraid of the prison like the devil runs from holy water. Exactly this effect is often underestimated by judges.'

Professionals have a different view. Almost 1000 jurists and criminologists turned against a harsher juvenile law with a resolution of the German association of youth courts and juvenile court representatives. According to scientific knowledge the assumption of the CDU that harsher punishment scares youth off could not be accepted. "There would be no reason to tighten youth court measures."

Koch wants to be re-elected on January the 27<sup>th</sup>. By the end of December he started a debate on the treatment of youth with a migration background. Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel encouraged her party colleague during the kick-off-meeting of the election campaign in the beginning of January. During the new-years-recipient of the Hessian CDU in Wiesbaden she met Koch's demands of a stricter juvenile law.

## ***"Election-campaign with fear", "going apeshit", "grotesque"***

The new advance of Hessian's prime minister met with a refusal cross party. The FDP which might be the new coalition partner of Koch in Hessen called the suggestion grotesque. For children under the age of 14 in fact instruments of the children and youth welfare service should be used. Furthermore FDP secretary general Dirk Niebel declared that children should at the worst be committed to a children's home.

Also the ranks of the coalition partners nationwide let rain blows on him: Vice chancellor Frank Walter Steinmeier (SPD) accused Koch of leading an irresponsible election campaign. "He leads a campaign with fear, instead of taking people's sorrows seriously. He is doing dangerous things" said the foreign minister on a SPD election campaign event in Kassel. According to Socialist home affairs specialist Dieter Wiefelspütz "this person is going apeshit". "Every day he comes up with unutterable words and everyday his suggestions get worse" told Wiefelspütz the "Thüringer Allgemeinen"-newspaper.

Meanwhile the animadversion on chancellor Merkel is getting harsher. Her vice Steinmeier accused her to commit herself to this line maybe against her own opinion." Even stronger was the critique of SPC-politician Sebastian Edathy. He told the "TAZ"-newspaper: "I'm stunned because Chancellor Angela Merkel does not bar the way of Hesse's prime minister and stops his xenophobic drive. Even more she supports him. Such a behaviour is dishonourable for a head of the German government."



# **BILD-Interview mit Hessens Ministerpräsident Roland Koch „Wer in Deutschland lebt, hat die Faust unten zu lassen!“**

05.01.2009 - 23:59 UHR

Von NIKOLAUS BLOME

**BILD: Herr Ministerpräsident, muss man nach dem Überfall von München nicht fragen, ob man als Deutscher im eigenen Land noch sicher ist?**

**Roland Koch:** Die Bilder des Überfalls zeigen eine atemberaubende Brutalität. Aber Gewaltausbrüche unter Jugendlichen ganz allgemein sind leider keine Einzelfälle mehr. Wenn das weiter einreißt, wird sich Verunsicherung in Deutschland breitmachen.

Redet Klartext: Hessens Ministerpräsident Roland Koch (49, CDU)

**BILD: Was lehrt der Münchner Fall konkret?**

**Koch:** Zivilcourage zeigen, es nicht hinnehmen, wenn Regeln verletzt werden! Aber zu dieser Zivilcourage gehört auch Solidarität der anderen, die sich mit unterhaken oder Hilfe holen. Die entscheidende Frage ist: Was lassen wir uns gefallen von einem kleinen Teil äußerst gewaltbereiter Jugendlicher, häufig mit ausländischem Hintergrund?

**BILD: Das Opfer von München ist explizit als „Deutscher“ attackiert worden. Es gibt bei Gewaltdelikten die Kategorie „ausländerfeindlicher Hintergrund“. Brauchen wir eine Kategorie „deutschfeindlicher Hintergrund“?**

**Koch:** Es ist mir völlig egal, welchen Hintergrund Schläger haben. Gewalt bleibt Gewalt. Wir haben aber zu lange ein seltsames soziologisches Verständnis für Gruppen aufgebracht, die bewusst als ethnische Minderheiten Gewalt ausüben. Wer in Deutschland lebt, hat sich ordentlich zu verhalten und die Faust unten zu lassen. So gehört es sich in einem zivilisierten Land.

**BILD: Was sagt es über den Stand der Integration, wenn der Anteil jugendlicher Ausländer an Gewaltkriminalität laut Statistiken sichtbar höher ist als ihr Anteil an der Gesamtbevölkerung?**

**Koch:** Wir haben zu viele kriminelle junge Ausländer. Niemand darf sich hinter seinem „Migrations-Status“ verschanzen. Null Toleranz gegen Gewalt muss ganz früh beginnen und Bestandteil unserer Integrationspolitik sein. Bis vor Kurzem wurden in multi-kultureller Verblendung Verhaltensweisen toleriert, die inzwischen zu hochexplosiven Gruppen-

Aggressionen führen können. Wir müssen Schluss machen mit bestimmten Lebenslügen. Die deutsche Position in der Integrationspolitik war lange leider nicht klar genug.

Video: Brutaler Überfall  
Zwei Männer treten einen Rentner zusammen

### **BILD: Was heißt deutsche Position?**


**Koch:** Deutschland ist kein klassisches Einwanderungsland wie z. B. Kanada oder Australien. Bei uns treffen sich nicht viele Kulturen und bilden dann gemeinsam eine neue. In Deutschland gibt es seit vielen Jahrhunderten eine christlich-abendländische Kultur. Wer sich als Ausländer nicht an unsere Regeln hält, ist hier fehl am Platze. Er kann nicht erwarten, dass wir uns mit ihm irgendwo in der Mitte treffen. Die Grundregeln von Anstand und Umgang sind nicht verhandelbar.

### **BILD: Würden Sie dem Opfer von München raten, beim nächsten Mal wieder so zu handeln?**

**Koch:** Wir alle müssen ihm sagen, dass er richtig gehandelt hat. Er hat nämlich hingeschaut, und wenn viele hinschauen, sind wir alle weniger bedroht. Der Staat wiederum muss klare Signale setzen. Verurteilte Täter zwischen 18 und 21 Jahren dürfen nicht vor allem mit Verständnispädagogik behandelt werden und regelmäßig offenen Vollzug bekommen. **Sie machen sich hinterher noch über ihre Übernachtungen im „Staatshotel“ lustig. Gefängnis muss man spüren, wenn es eine Wirkung haben soll.**

Hessens Ministerpräsident kritisiert Richter

## **Koch will Jugendstrafrecht auch bei Kindern**

 [Bildunterschrift: Ministerpräsident Koch legt erneut nach: Jetzt forderte er die Anwendung des Jugendstrafrechts bei unter 14-Jährigen. ]

Zwei Wochen vor der Landtagswahl in Hessen legt Ministerpräsident Roland Koch in seinem Wahlkampfthema Nummer eins - dem Umgang mit kriminellen Jugendlichen - noch einmal nach. In der "Bild am Sonntag" forderte er nun, das Jugendstrafrecht in Ausnahmefällen auch bei unter 14-Jährigen anzuwenden.

"Wir wollen keine Schnellschüsse, aber wir müssen zur Kenntnis nehmen, dass es eine sehr aggressive Kriminalität einer sehr kleinen Gruppe von Menschen unter 14 Jahren gibt. Oft werden diese Jugendlichen auch noch von Erwachsenen benutzt, die genau auf die Strafunmündigkeit der Täter setzen", sagte Koch dem Blatt. Sein Vorschlag: "In Ausnahmefällen könnten Elemente des Jugendstrafrechts für diese Zielgruppe eingesetzt werden." Eine weitere Antwort sei die strikere Entziehung des Sorgerechts durch die Jugendbehörden.

## ***Koch hält Richter-Urteile oft für zu mild***

Auch die Justiz nahm der CDU-Politiker ins Visier. Er warf den Richtern vor, oftmals zu milde zu urteilen. "Ich bin gelegentlich sehr verwundert über unsere Jugendrichter, die ja eigentlich die Instrumente der Härte zu verwalten haben", so Koch. "Die Richter, die als einzige Strafen aussprechen können, gehen mit diesem Instrument wenig selbstbewusst um", sagte er. "Auch bei 20-Jährigen, die ansonsten ja auch wie Erwachsene behandelt werden wollen, wenden sie Jugendstrafrecht an, um mildere Strafen verhängen zu können." Das sei ein falsches Signal. "Diese Jugendlichen fürchten die Haft wie der Teufel das Weihwasser. Genau diese Wirkung wird oft von Jugendrichtern unterschätzt."

Experten sehen das dagegen anders: So wandten sich fast 1000 Juristen und Kriminologen in einer Resolution der Deutsche Vereinigung für Jugendgerichte und Jugendgerichtshilfen gegen ein schärferes Jugendstrafrecht. Die Annahme der CDU, harte Strafen schreckten stärker ab, sei nach wissenschaftlichen Erkenntnissen der Kriminologie nicht zu erwarten, heißt es in der Resolution. "Für eine Verschärfung des Jugendstrafrechts besteht kein Anlass."

Koch will am 27. Januar wiedergewählt werden. Im Wahlkampf hatte er Ende Dezember eine Debatte um den Umgang mit kriminellen Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund begonnen. Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel hatte ihren Parteikollegen zum Auftakt der heißen Wahlkampfphase Anfang Januar unterstützt und sich beim Neujahrsempfang der hessischen CDU in Wiesbaden Kochs Forderung nach einem schärferen Jugendstrafrecht angeschlossen.

### ***"Wahlkampf mit Angst", "durchgedreht", "grotesk"***

Parteiübergreifend stieß der neue Vorstoß des hessischen Ministerpräsidenten auf Ablehnung. Die FDP, möglicher Koalitionspartner für Koch in Hessen, nannte den Vorschlag grotesk. Für Kinder unter 14 Jahren müssten vielmehr die Instrumente der Kinder- und Jugendhilfe genutzt und notfalls Kinder in geschlossene Heime eingewiesen werden, erklärte FDP-Generalsekretär Dirk Niebel.

Aus den Reihen des Koalitionspartners auf Bundesebene hagelt es weiterhin Kritik: Vizekanzler Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) warf Koch vor, einen verantwortungslosen Wahlkampf zu führen. "Er macht Wahlkampf mit Angst, statt die Sorgen der Leute ernst zu nehmen. Das, was er macht, ist gefährlich", sagte der Außenminister auf einer SPD-Wahlkampfveranstaltung in Kassel. Laut SPD-Innenexperte Dieter Wiefelspütz "dreht dieser Mensch nun völlig durch". "Jeden Tag kommt er mit neuen Unsäglichkeiten, und jeden Tag werden seine Vorschläge schlimmer", sagte Wiefelspütz der "Thüringer Allgemeinen".

Unterdessen wird auch die Kritik an Kanzlerin Merkel immer schärfer: Ihr Vize Steinmeier warf ihr vor, "sich auf diese Linie einschwören zu lassen, vielleicht auch gegen ihre eigene Überzeugung". Noch schärfer äußerte sich der SPD-Politiker Sebastian Edathy. Der "taz" er: "Ich bin fassungslos darüber, dass Bundeskanzlerin Angela Merkel sich dem ausländerfeindlich geprägten Treiben des hessischen Ministerpräsidenten nicht etwa in den Weg stellt, sondern ihn auch noch unterstützt. So ein Verhalten ist einer deutschen Regierungschefin nicht würdig."