FRIEDENSNOTE NR. 1

The Double Standard of the Warmongers

The singer of Creedence Clearwater Revival, John Fogerty, denounces the class divisions of war in his song “Fortunate Son”.

The rich men make the war, and the poor have to fight in it. That, loosely translated, is what John Fogerty said. Fogerty is the lead singer of Creedence Clearwater Revival, a band that has become impossible to imagine the history of rock music without.

In the legendary song “Fortunate Son”, Fogerty, with his God-given, unmistakable voice, screams out his rage that during the Vietnam era young Americans from humble backgrounds were drafted into the military and sent to war, while the sons of senators could avoid the war thanks to their privileged families. That, at least, is how the singer saw it. To Fogerty, the latter were the “Fortunate Sons”.

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SONG Fortunate Son

PERFORMER Creedence Clearwater Revival

ALBUM Willy and the Poor Boys, 1969

In just 20 minutes, sitting on his bed in the bedroom, Fogerty wrote this song in 1969. It simply flowed out of him, he once said. You can sense that flow in the song. With enormous force and great power in his voice, framed by a fittingly driving rhythm of drums and guitars, Fogerty manages to make a musical statement that, at its core, has lost none of its validity to this day.

With "Fortunate Son", Fogerty exposes the double standard of those political decision-makers who, on the one hand, had no problem exposing the mass of conscripts to the horror of war, while on the other hand holding their own sons back.

It was one of the first songs to address class differences with regard to the draft and service in Vietnam. But beneath the surface, "Fortunate Son" also carries a more general criticism of the double standards and the dishonesty on the political side when it comes to war – at least the song can be read that way. To highlight the "fortunate sons" is, at its heart, to draw attention to a far larger overall problem. Rich men, high-ranking politicians, power elites set wars in motion in which others fight for them. Wars are surrounded by lies, by double standards and by a great deal of hypocrisy.

Where are songs like this in our own time?

"*Some folks are born with a silver spoon in hand*", Fogerty sings, adding the words: "*Yeah, some folks are born with star-spangled eyes. They send you off to war. And when you ask them, 'How much should we give?', their only answer is: 'More, more, more.'*" And in a refrain that repeats several times in the song, it goes: "*It ain't me, it ain't me. I'm no millionaire's son. It ain't me. It ain't me. I'm no fortunate son.*"

With "Fortunate Son" it is much the same as with Bruce Springsteen's song "Born in the USA", which many perceive as an uncritical patriotic anthem to America – which, however, is wrong. "Fortunate Son", too, is taken by some who never engage with the lyrics and the background as an uncritical, pro-USA song. Yet "Fortunate Son" is anything but a blind hymn of praise to the USA. It is an attack on the sanctimony of the political establishment. Fogerty is, however, very much a patriot, and when asked about his song he said:

> *"Questioning the politics of your own country, especially in a war that kills people, is definitely not un-American. It is probably the most patriotic thing you can do."*

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FIRST PUBLISHED ON MANOVA

www.manova.news/artikel/die-doppelmoral-der-kriegsmacher

AUDIO VERSION OF THIS ARTICLE · RADIO MÜNCHEN

www.radiomuenchen.net/de/podcast-archiv/sendeformate/friedensnoten/2033-fortunate-son-und-die-doppelmoral-der-kriegsmacher-friedensnoten-01.html?highlight=WyJkb3BwZWxtb3JhbCJd

THE SONG IN ITS ORIGINAL · YOUTUBE

www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWijx_AgPiA

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Marcus Klöckner studierte Soziologie, Medienwissenschaften und Amerikanistik. Sein Weg in die Medien führte ihn über den Lokaljournalismus zum politischen Journalismus. Der herrschafts- und medienkritische Blick ist Markenzeichen seiner Arbeit. Im Sinne der Soziologie von Pierre Bourdieu und Charles Wright Mills lüftet er den Schleier von Macht- und Herrschaftsverhältnissen in unserer Gesellschaft.

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