

Ulf Wuggenig

My Lai, March 1968, Ozarichi, March 1944

Letter to the new editor-in-chief of the *Landeszeitung*, quasi-monopolist local journal in Lüneburg, Marc Rath, sent on 03/09/2018

In the daily newspaper *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) dated 03/08/2018 it was written under the title *Der Sündenfall | The Fall*: "one of the worst war crimes of the U.S. Army took place in March 1968" – My Lai, perpetrated by the 23rd Infantry Division (ID) on 03/16. They killed "more than 500 Vietnamese, predominantly children, women and old men," precisely 504 civilians. The reports and commentaries that were published from 1969 onward crucially changed the attitude toward the Vietnam War, in Germany as well.

Also in March, 24 years earlier, an incomparably larger war crime was committed: The murder of at least 9,000 women, children, old and sick persons from March 12 to 19, 1944, in Belarussian Ozarichi. As has been known since 2003 from the dissertation of Prof. Rass, the Lüneburg 110th Infantry Division (110th I. D.) decisively participated in this crime (see "Research Report" 03/11/2017 and Backstage I – IV <http://kunstraum.leuphana.de>).

On 03/09/2018, the *Landeszeitung* published Eggeling's "Umstrittene Geschichte" [*Controversial history*] on this topic. After the meetings of the veterans of the former 110th I.D. in Lüneburg had received uncritical press coverage from 1956 to 1990, a few contributions like this one have been published since 2017. But the crime was written about not in the sense of a scientifically secured fact. Furthermore, not a single one of the "Backstage I - III" exhibitions at the Leuphana in 2017 was reviewed, which all presented crucial material on this topic. Instead, the press reports were only about points of view and opinions on the occurrence – either of *Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Nationalsozialismus* (VVN), Prof. Dr. Rass, or also mine. Until today, I and other residents of Lüneburg – although not born here – have been waiting for an editorial statement or commentary on one of the most outrageous war crimes of the 20th century. How was the former *Landeszeitung*'s editor-in-chief bidden farewell?: "As the guideline for his work, Helmut Pleß always regarded the constitutional mission clearly outlined by the Basic Law: informing, commenting and controlling." (Publisher Wiesemann, *Landeszeitung*,

11/03/1983, p. 5). Has the guideline of the newspaper invoking the Basic Law substantially changed since then?

Prof. Dr. Ulf Wuggenig

Dean of the Faculty of the Humanities and Social Sciences

Leuphana University of Lüneburg