

The Toilet Paper Flagship: Creative Resistance to Pandemic Restrictions

For over a year now, governments across the world have introduced and enforced a series of arbitrary restrictions on their citizens and their businesses, but not without a certain degree of pushback.

Some small businesses in Germany have found a creative way to maneuver around the diktats of Chancellor Angela Merkel and other governmental leaders. [The Washington Post](#) reports that many small family-owned stores have started selling “essential” items in order to stay open and allow their customers an unencumbered shopping experience.

While one might not expect to find toilet paper and food for sale at a clothing store, this is exactly the approach that family-run clothing store *Modehaus Kuhn* has taken. Now it has rebranded itself as a “toilet paper flagship store”—which continues to sell clothes, as well.

“We did it to remain open and generate sales that are basically essential for our survival,” store manager Johannes Kuhn told the *Post*. “On the other hand, it’s satire that’s simply a criticism of the injustices of [government] decisions.”

Kuhn went on to call it “absurd” that the government enforces hygiene measures on some stores while giving a free pass to others. He now has other small clothing stores in Germany calling him up to ask his advice on bypassing government restrictions.

While so-called “essential” businesses have been allowed to operate almost as normal, smaller stores and those whose

products are deemed unimportant have been subject to an entirely different set of restrictions. Those businesses which get the “essential” label from the government are typically big box chain stores which would have survived the pandemic anyway, thanks to brand recognition and the ease of online shopping from home.

The smaller, mom-and-pop stores suffer the most under economic shutdowns. In the United States, the definition of an “essential” business has always been contentious, especially when so-called “nonessential” businesses were closed.

The main question, of course, remains: Essential to whom?

Who would you deem unessential? The waitress struggling to pay her college tuition? Or perhaps the independent bookstore owner who just put his life savings into his business? How about the janitor whose family depends on his income for food on the table? Which of these people should be denied the dignity of work, and the income that is the fruit of their efforts?

As Mike Rowe, host of the “Dirty Jobs” television series, [said last year](#), “I don’t think there is any such thing as a nonessential worker.”

Some will say that we should be grateful that stores now, for the most part, operate under restrictions, rather than being shut down completely. Any gratitude in this regard should be directed at God for our divinely given rights, not towards our elected leaders who have violated those rights for the better part of a year, only to back off slightly as of late.

Besides, Americans may still have need of the *Modehaus Kuhn* style of creative resistance to the arbitrariness of government. For example, [the CDC director](#) has called for Michigan to be locked down once again, as COVID cases surge in the state. The United States may not be done with the unprecedented infringement of its citizens’ freedoms.

As such, it is important that demonstrations such as *Modehaus Kuhn's* not only take place, but that they are shared widely. Not only do they give people the courage to stage their own little protests against the infringement of their rights, they also allow us to laugh at our arbitrary leaders. We could all use a laugh these days, and perhaps the funny way stories as these shake out will help us to remember the tragedies imposed by our government during the pandemic.

From the economic consequences of government mandated shutdowns, to the immense increase of [deaths of despair](#) caused by the same, the damage to American society, and to nations across the world, has not been limited to the mayhem and death inflicted by COVID-19 itself. Hopefully voters will remember how their leaders' actions affected their lives and will vote in the next election cycle to throw out any politician who has no respect for their God-given rights.

In the meantime, we should all find ways to fit some sort of "toilet paper flagship store" into our lives. We need to keep these stories alive.

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