

## What is a banana republic?

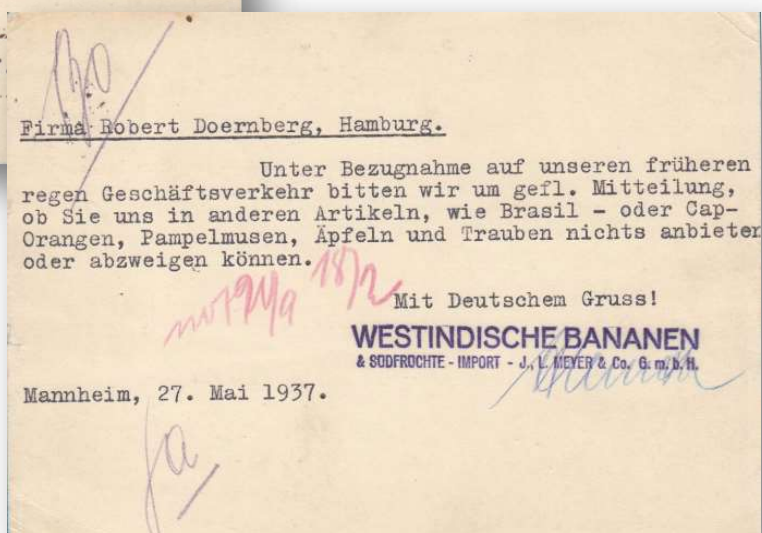
Karl Lauterbach, referring to the number of corona cases reported in the "federal state" of Mallorca, states that there may be manipulation to attract as many tourists as possible. The Mallorquins counter immediately and let Germany know that they are not a banana republic.

The keyword has been used and we want to examine what a banana republic could be, what it consists of, and how it must be structured, using a practical example, a postal stationery from the Third Reich. We will try Wikipedia for a definition: *"Banana republic is the pejorative term for states in which corruption and venality prevail, whose legal system does not function, economic or political-moral conditions are characterized by inefficiency and instability, or in which state arbitrariness prevails or to which these characteristics are attributed."*



Basically, we want to note: the example with dictator Hitler is lame, because the Third Reich could never be used as an example of a banana republic, because the parliament was eliminated and the leader was all-powerful - thus it was not a republic. But there was a lot of lying, faking and stealing. Even the

first groundbreaking for the German autobahns faked? The first Reich Autobahn section Cologne - Düsseldorf dates from 1925 - so Hitler was not the creator of the German autobahns and thus the inscription "first cut of the spade" is not correct [unless one assumes Hitler never had a spade in his hand before].



In 1931, Fritz Todt is hired as the autobahn construction specialist - and he champions nature conservation. Bee pastures are planned along the autobahns, animal and plant protection is to be taken into account; there will be speed limits at places where game passes. Unemployed people will be obliged to work; those who do not want to work will no longer receive assistance. After strikes, the construction company "Siemens-Bauunion" suggests recruiting only "elements" loyal to the regime as construction workers. The workers are portrayed as heroes by the media, in reality the pay, accommodation and food are miserable - so here too lies and deception.

## APPLIED PHILATELY NO. 018

The back of the card gives a little more insight into the jargon of the time: The company "West Indian Bananas & Southern Fruits - Import" writes of "branching off", later the term "organizing" is introduced. In the war years, this actually meant "taking", which is how theft was quite affectionately paraphrased. According to today's Wikipedia definition, the writer of the lines at that time would perhaps be a banana republican, because Wikipedia expands the term banana republic as follows: *"Therefore, this term is also used pejoratively in political discussions and polemics about industrialized countries such as Switzerland, Germany, France, Austria, Greece, or Italy, for example, when similar practices (influence peddling by foreign corporations corruption, crime, nepotism, personal enrichment at state expense, and dubious elections) are alleged or criticized."*

Now using this evidence for the term "banana republic" in thematic philately may be too far-fetched for some of you. But there is also more "direct" evidence. For example, the Kingdom of Tonga issued stamps in the shape of bananas in 1969, 1970 and 1978. Covers (franked) with these stamps are an eye-catcher in any exhibit. It should be noted that this is not meant to imply that the Kingdom of Tonga is a banana republic.



Further reading: [ARD-Tagesschau.de](http://ARD-Tagesschau.de); [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banana_republic)