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In September 1994, I entered the University of Bochum as a biology student. Along with other students, I co-founded a student animal rights group which still exists today.

Students of biology at the University have to complete two lab courses involving animal misuse: the morphological dissection course for beginners in the first semester and the physiology course in the 6th semester. The last dispute between students and professors about the ‘necessity’ of killing animals for study ended with an official statement by the University against alternative methods in February, 1994.

Nevertheless, from the beginning of my course, I tried to make an arrangement with the professors for a personal exemption from participation in obligatory dissections. Simultaneously, four of us participated in the morphological dissection course but refused the dissection of specially killed animals. All these efforts, however, proved fruitless. In January, 1995, the professors proclaimed that the four of us would not be allowed to participate in the exam of the morphological dissection course, an important condition to get the necessary certificate.

As a last resort, therefore, we instituted legal proceedings against the University. And, unexpectedly, we were successful. In February, 1995, and only one day before the exam, the Administrative Court of Gelsenkirchen (first level) permitted our petitions and told the University through an interim order to let us participate in the exam. Although all of us passed the exam, the University withheld the certificate of the morphological dissection course.

So the main lawsuit was filed in April, 1995 and aimed both at this certificate and a further education without animal misuse. In February, 1996, one of the four plaintiffs, Heike Weigt, had to take the University to court again to achieve a new interim order. She had already finished her basic study and needed to participate in the intermediate chemistry test in order to proceed to the specialized level of her degree. The University was denying this test to her because she now did not have the necessary certificates to participate, and the date of trial in the main lawsuit was not in prospect. Heike was successful again.

But this time the University appealed to the Upper Administrative Court of Munster (second level), and unfortunately, the appeal was permitted. In June, 1995, the Upper Administrative Court revised the judicial decision of the Administrative Court by disaffirming the interim admission in the intermediate chemistry test. An appeal wasn’t possible.

After this unexpected development, the situation for me was also hopeless. Although the main lawsuit was initiated in April, 1995, there was no prospect of a trial before 1997. Because of some very strange statements made by the Upper Administrative Court it also seemed impossible that the main lawsuit could have any success at the first two levels. The only hope for studying biology, therefore, seemed to be the third level—the Federal

Administrative Court.

But even this was a problem. On the one hand, I could not do anything more in my basic study, having all the necessary certificates apart from the morphological dissection course, and on the other, I was not allowed to begin my specialized study because of the absent intermediate test certificate. Finally, it seemed absolutely impossible to continue the study until the Federal Administrative Court had decided in the main lawsuit. But this would not happen for the next five years. And because of the financial necessity to complete my studies fast, it was impossible for me to continue my lawsuit without also studying at the same time. By chance I heard that in Osnabrück students could evade both the morphological dissection and the physiology course. So Osnabrück was the only university in Germany that did not force its students to take part in animal misuse. And so over a two-week period I changed to Osnabrück together with Heike Weigt. I withdrew my lawsuit because its maintenance was not possible judicially.

I gained my intermediate certificate through the University of Osnabrück and with luck I will finish my study in two years. I am still active in most levels of animal rights. From 1995, I have been active in SATIS, the German EuroNICHE group. I have the firm intention to found a group called Biologists for Animal Rights after finishing my study.