

Germany: Neo-Nazi attack in Dortmund restaurant

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27 November 2007

On November 17, a group of around 30 neo-Nazis, armed with cobblestones and batons, attacked the Casablanca restaurant in Dortmund. According to the police report, the group shouted “shit Turks” and “shit foreigners,” a reference to the Turkish guests inside. Nevertheless, the police are refusing to admit that the attack was racially motivated, and the offenders have been charged only with disturbing the peace.

The perpetrators had apparently gathered on the other side of the street, before suddenly crossing it and storming the restaurant. After a short argument, the bouncers were attacked and then dragged into the restaurant.

Shortly thereafter, a man threw a cobblestone through the front window. He then pushed his way through the door and a fight ensued. A man inside the restaurant was later injured with pepper spray and threatened with a gun. The majority of the perpetrators were able to flee the scene before the police arrived. Only five people were arrested, one of whom was the man with the gun.

Rheinisch Straße, where the restaurant is situated, in the suburb of Dorstfeld, is home to many migrants. This was the main reason why the neo-Nazis had set their sights on this area for a confrontation. The suburb itself is in a derelict condition—many houses are dilapidated and numerous shops are empty. Around one fifth of the population is unemployed.

This was the latest in a series of neo-Nazi attacks that have occurred with increasing regularity in the last few years in the German industrial heartland of the Ruhr area. During the assault, the men wore shirts carrying the usual Nazi slogans and emblems, but also with the words “Dorstfeld will remain German.” Every previous attack was targeted migrants and young people who were identified as supporters of left-wing parties or groups. The victims were all violently assaulted, and many times the ground was left marked with boot imprints. The office windows of German Member of Parliament Ulla Jelpke, from the Left Party, as well as those of the local branch of the Green Party have been smashed on several occasions.

Previously located a short distance from Casablanca was a shop frequented by neo-Nazis that sells Nazi clothes, CDs, books, newspapers, and other accessories. The shop, under the name Donnerschlag (thunderclap), was forced to close, however, as a result of a series of protests by residents and an eviction notice issued by the landlord.

Shortly thereafter, the neo-Nazis—many of them well known and with criminal records—found a new location to reopen Donnerschlag as well as another premises to open a “national piercing and tattoo studio.” However, a temporary order issued by the local council prevented the use of the Rheinisch Straße for such purposes. The official reason given by the council for this ordinance was that it would protect shops in the inner city.

Donnerschlag reestablished itself though under the name of “Buy or die” and was closely connected with the Dortmund Nazi rock group Oidoxie. From the outset, the shop was an important base for the extreme right-wing scene. In January 2007, the landlord was able to get court approval to shut down the shop in April.

On its latest CD, entitled *Straftat* (criminal offence), Oidoxie claim that “*Ihr treibt uns nicht in die Knie*” (you cannot break us). Oidoxie is not only the most well-known Nazi band in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, it also regularly plays its racist and anti-Semitic texts at neo-Nazi concerts internationally, including just recently in Belgium and Russia.

The attack on the Casablanca restaurant is the most recent in the past period, a sign of the escalating right-wing violence in the east of the Ruhr area. On September 2, the HirschQ pub, a regular meeting spot of the left-wing scene, was attacked by neo-Nazis, who also used pepper spray on their victims, five of whom were injured. On April 17, the same pub was the scene of another attack, in which neo-Nazis punched and kicked their young victims before fleeing when other guests at the restaurant came to their assistance.

The offenders, under the name of the “Anarchist Nationalists,” told the left-wing youth, “You know that Dortmund is our city. Why are you hanging around here?”

Another catch-phrase of the neo-Nazis is “Zero tolerance for democrats!” On April 21-24 of this year, the entire front windows of the HirschQ pub were defaced with swastikas.

A few days later, at the end of April, two neo-Nazis attempted to smash the windows of the HirschQ by throwing cobblestones at them. The attempt was unsuccessful, as security glass was installed after the windows had been broken during an attack in 2006. When the publican opened the window, the two shouted “Sieg Heil” and gave the Nazi salute. The police were called and they arrested the two men. However, the police once again concluded that there was no political motive to the attack, and the men were only charged with damage to property.

After the first attack on HirschQ in 2006, 18 suspects were arrested, but only 1 was charged. During the trial in March 2007, the prosecutor spoke of a “civil war-like scene.” Nevertheless, the convicted was sentenced to just 100 hours of community service plus one week’s house arrest, despite the fact that the 20-year-old had been convicted of sedition in 2002. Although the man still lived in the same shared apartment with other neo-Nazis known to the authorities, he was able to convince the court that he had cut all ties with the right-wing milieu.

Using a variety of tactics, the right-wing scene has attempted since the 1970s to establish itself in Dortmund and has a long record of criminal offences. At one time, in an attempt to recruit football fans, it formed *Borussenfront*. It also established the since-banned FAP (Free Comradeship) and most recently the “Anarchist Nationalists” and the *RechtsRockszene* (right-wing rock scene).

The leader of the *Borussenfront* and all the subsequent organisations is the repeat offender and nationally known neo-Nazi Siegfried “SS-Siggi” Borchardt. Borchardt, who has made appearances in neighbouring countries as an open national socialist, prefers to use the term *Nationale Sozialisten* (national socialists from different countries).

Since the council elections in 2004, three representatives of the right-wing extreme DVU (German People’s Union) sit in the Dortmund City Council.

On its web site, the DVU publishes letters of complaint from anti-fascists, and implicitly, although not directly, calls for them to be attacked. Prosecution cases against representatives of the right-wing extremist scene are constantly dropped due to “lack of evidence.” The Dortmund defence lawyer André Picker often takes on these cases; his office in the inner city contains a letter box with an iron cross on it.

Neo-Nazi marches, usually organised by Borchardt and Christian Worch, which generally bring together a couple of hundred neo-Nazis from different parts of Germany, are always confronted by demonstrations of thousands of anti-

fascists. There are countless initiatives and campaigns against neo-Nazis and racism inside primary and secondary schools, as well as youth centres. Around 4,000 people demonstrated in April 2005 against the murder of Thomas Schulz by 17-year-old neo-Nazi Sven Kahlin. Schulz was stabbed because he voiced his opposition to the right-wing slogans of Kahlin. After the murder, the right-wing extremists in Dortmund posted placards that read, “Those that stand in the way of the movement must face the consequences.” In November 2005, Kahlin was found guilty of manslaughter, not murder, and sentenced to seven years of juvenile detention.

The benevolent attitude often taken by the police and justice department towards neo-Nazis must be seen in connection with the growing violence of the latter. In addition, the fact that the extreme right-wing NPD (National Democratic Party of Germany) and the neo-Nazi movement in general have representatives at all levels of government has not resulted in a decrease in right-wing violence.

In the first half of 2007, according to the federal government, 324 people were victims of right-wing assaults. In total, 5,321 cases of “politically motivated criminal activity” by right-wingers were registered. These numbers are slightly lower than those for the first half of 2006. However, statistical records for assaults with a right-wing background are usually inaccurate. The monthly figures published by the federal government usually have to be subsequently corrected upwards. For example, the official number of right-wing offences for all of 2006 was 12,240, 726 of them violent ones, setting a new record. However, in the end, this figure had to be adjusted to 18,000 because the right-wing background to many offences had been denied by the perpetrators for as long as possible, or left undetermined.

In the first nine months of this year, there were 716 officially recorded offences of an anti-Semitic nature. In August, the number of offences of a right-wing or racist character hit 1,116—a record. Fifty-eight of these were violent offences, resulting in 58 injured persons. However, only four arrest warrants have so far been issued.



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