

State and media active in building up a far-right movement in Germany

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On Monday thousands of neo-Nazis marched through the city center of Dresden. The self-proclaimed Pegida movement has been systematically boosted by the state apparatus and the media. The leaders and supporters of Pegida feel invigorated by the current campaign by leading politicians and the media directed against refugees.

With 15,000 to 20,000 participants, the long-prepared demonstration was twice as large as that of the previous week but smaller than previous demonstrations. Neo-Nazis were bused from all over Germany to Dresden where they met up with local rightists in the main city of the state of Saxony.

Evidently encouraged by the officially promoted campaign of xenophobia, the neo-Nazis were even more blunt and obscene than usual. One of the keynote speakers at the demonstration was the German-Turkish right-wing extremist Akif Pirinçci. To the applause of the demonstrators he described Germany as a “Muslim garbage dump,” which threatened to overwhelm the German people. He went on: “Of course there are other alternatives. But unfortunately the concentration camps are currently out of service.” The Pegida mob applauded.

Other speakers at the rally included Pegida founder Lutz Bachmann and representatives of right-wing parties from the Czech Republic, Italy, Poland and England.

On the fringes of the demonstration participants lashed out at immigrants and counter-demonstrators. According to the *Sächsischen Zeitung*, a large group of Pegida supporters armed themselves with stones and whatever they could find lying around. On the way to the main station they hunted down two men. One of the pair, who came to Germany from Morocco, was forced to the ground. In addition, a team of *Spiegel Online*

reporters was attacked.

After the clashes the alliance “No Nazis in Dresden,” which organized a counter-demonstration, claimed that police had permitted the attacks. At several points Pegida participants were able to rampage unimpeded and attack the opposing demonstrations. Several reports indicate that on a number of occasions the police opened their lines for Pegida hooligans to pass. The counter-demonstrations drew more than 15,000 people.

The neo-Nazis, who have been marching through Dresden nearly every week for a year, evidently feel encouraged by the propaganda spread by the media and political parties against refugees and migrants.

In recent weeks, leading government figures have issued vile tirades against refugees. Horst Seehofer, leader of the Bavarian Christian Social Union (one of the parties in the country’s ruling coalition) threatened to take illegal emergency measures to repel refugees while Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere (CDU) has described refugees as ungrateful and violent.

Humboldt Professor Jörg Baberowski described the growing violence against refugees, “given the problems that we have in Germany with immigration,” as “relatively harmless” and recommended the building of a far-right party to enable “people to address the problems.”

Such statements, in fact, are just one expression of the campaign against refugees being carried out by the parliamentary parties, encouraging in turn the right-wing extremists of Pegida. Refugees are being herded together like cattle, housed in cold and wet tents and denied urgent medical attention.

Refugees are subjected to inhuman treatment at the external borders of the EU, attacked and repulsed by police. In the Mediterranean the German navy uses force to repel refugee boats.

It is this inhumane action against people seeking protection that encourages the right-wing extremists. The state, political parties and much of the media have provided the virulently anti-Islamic Pegida movement with considerable support.

Pegida was supported from the start by the state apparatus and leading politicians. The State Agency for Civic Education made premises available to Pegida to propagate their racist lies at press conferences. The same politicians who now feign concern about Pegida, such as Social Democratic Party (SPD) Chairman Sigmar Gabriel and Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere, were calling for a “dialogue” with the “concerned citizens” of Pegida a few months ago.

State initiatives to build a far-right movement are not new. In 2003, the Federal Constitutional Court was forced to close down a case against the fascist National Democratic Party (NPD), after it emerged that the organisation was riddled with state agents. Many of the statements used to justify banning the party came from members on the payroll of the secret service. Some of the judges at that time justified the decision to discontinue the prohibition proceedings with a revealing statement. They declared that the NPD was basically a “state-run organisation.”

The situation is very similar today. The links between the secret services and the far right are increasingly coming to light. Several committees of inquiry revealed that at least 25 state undercover agents were active in the far-right terrorist group National Socialist Underground (NSU). Last summer evidence emerged that the secret service was directly involved in assassinations carried out by the NSU.

The connection between intelligence agencies and the neo-Nazi scene is especially close in Saxony. It remains unknown whether the initiator of the Pegida marches, Lutz Bachmann, cooperates with the secret service. What is certain is that Bachmann is on probation for offences involving assault, burglary, theft and drug trafficking.

In January his Internet postings were published revealing his references to foreigners as “brutes,” “scum” and “filth.” He had also published a photo of himself with a Hitler moustache and haircut on Facebook. Following press reports on this, he dropped out of sight briefly.

In March Bachmann was threatened with a further

legal process. The prosecutor’s office in Dresden had challenged an earlier judgment for failure to pay maintenance and demanded a heavy fine or renewed detention. Shortly before the trial, however, the prosecution withdrew their appeal and Bachmann stepped up his right-wing propaganda.

Last week it was revealed that one of the founders of the “hogesa” group, which has numerous links with Pegida, was an agent of the domestic intelligence service. Roland Sokol is alleged to have been working as a spy since at least since 2009

Representatives of the far-right Pegida group are also invited to talk shows and interviews. Just one day before the last demonstration on Monday the leader of the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) in the Thuringian state parliament, Björn Höcke, was allotted prime time on television to propagate his racist filth. The AfD is one of the main supporters of Pegida demonstrations.

The fact that the Pegida movement, supported by the state and media, now openly sports its fascist credentials is a warning. Due to their failure to break the strong swell of popular solidarity for refugees, the ruling elites are increasingly relying on aggression. They are mobilizing the dregs of society to intimidate anyone who assists refugees and opposes the war policy of the German government.



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