

Far-right German nationalist party calls for shooting refugees

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The call by extreme right wing party Alternative for Germany (AfD) for the use of firearms by border police against refugees marks a new stage in the all-party political offensive against refugees in Germany.

On Sunday, AfD leader Frauke Petry declared in an interview with the *Mannheimer Morgen* that police must prevent illegal border crossings and “when necessary also use firearms. This is what the law says.”

On Saturday evening, AfD deputy chairwoman Beatrix von Storch wrote on her Facebook page that whoever does not accept the order to “halt” at the border is an attacker. “And we must defend ourselves against attacks,” she added. In answer to a comment asking whether she also “wanted to prevent women and children from entering by force of arms,” Storch answered with a decisive “Yes.”

The government and opposition Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Greens have reacted to these statements with feigned shock and the call for surveillance and a stronger state.

SPD chairman Sigmar Gabriel called for the AfD to be monitored by domestic intelligence agencies. It was “extremely doubtful” the AfD “upheld the fundamental free democratic order of the republic,” Gabriel told *Bild am Sonntag*. For him, the AfD belonged “in the Annual Report of the Protection of the Constitution (domestic intelligence service) and not on television.”

Katrin Göring-Eckardt, the head of the Greens’ parliamentary fraction, also appealed to the intelligence services: “The Office for the Protection of the Constitution should examine to what extent the AfD meets the requirements for monitoring,” she told *Spiegel Online*. “A state based on the rule of law appears to be a thorn in the side of many AfD members. It is highly questionable whether a party that wants to shoot refugees at the border and trumpets racist theories can be, or wants to be a part of our democratic system.”

Similar reactions have come from the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). “When the leadership of the AfD explicitly calls for children to be shot at the border, they forfeit the protection of the constitution which permits even extreme views,” said deputy CDU chair Armin Laschet. “Human dignity, proportional means, respect for life—the AfD violates all of them. They are becoming a party which betrays the constitution and the values of our country and of civilization,” Laschet added.

Do Gabriel, Laschet and Co. really believe the population, deeply outraged by the inhumane statements of the AfD, can be so easily fooled? In reality, the same parties and media figures now denouncing the AfD share responsibility for the return of fascistic demands like the shooting of women and children to the realm of official political discourse 70 years after the end of National Socialism.

A few notes and observations must be made:

1) For several months now, hardly a day has gone by in which the media has not invited representatives of the AfD onto prominent talk shows and given them a primetime platform to spread their fascistic propaganda. Storch began her agitation against refugees last Sunday on the “Anne Will” show, denouncing the supposed “welcoming culture” of Chancellor Angela Merkel and calling for a drastic reduction in refugee numbers. She received support from former federal minister Hans-Peter Friedrich (Christian Social Union). On Wednesday, Petry then delivered a similar tirade on the “Maischberger” show.

2). Official policy and the media first created the racially charged atmosphere which the AfD has fueled further. At the beginning of last year, representatives of every party in parliament spoke out in favour of a dialog with followers of the radical right-wing Pegida movement. In the last week, representatives of the same parties used the events of New Years’ Eve in Cologne to

intensify their rhetoric against immigrants and Muslims and loudly demanded the closing of the borders, quotas for refugees, and expedited deportations of “criminal foreigners.”

3) The AfD is merely articulating in explicit terms the consequences of measures which German politicians have long demanded. Last October, CSU chair and vice-chancellor Horst Seehofer threatened extra-legal “emergency measures” in the event that Merkel did not reverse her refugee policy. In a commentary entitled “Brown Rhetoric,” even *Spiegel Online* criticized him for this, saying Seehofer not only made use of “National Socialist rhetoric” but also encouraged “totalitarian attitudes.”

At the beginning of last week, the CSU sent a letter to the chancellor’s office and demanded an effective protection of the German borders. Similar right-wing sentiments came from the SPD, the Greens and the Left Party. When Sahra Wagenknecht, chair of Left Party’s parliamentary fraction, joined in the agitation against refugees and the call for a strong state with the words “whoever abuses the right to hospitality has lost the right to be a guest,” she received praise, not accidentally, from leading AfD member Alexander Gauland.

What is behind this sharp turn to the right among the German elite?

Ultimately, it is driven by the same social and political contradictions that led to dictatorship, war and barbarism in the 1930s. The German elite are reacting to the historic crisis of European and international capitalism, the growing tensions between the major powers and the deep social division in society by again developing an aggressive foreign policy. To do so, just as in the past, they stir up racism and begin to rely on brute force. Or to paraphrase Trotsky: German imperialism vomits up its “undigested barbarism.”

An interview with the prominent German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk in the latest edition of *Cicero* reveals how far this process has progressed. Sloterdijk complains that, in Germany, the attitude prevails that “a border is only there to be crossed.” The hope of “philosophers” was: “The Europeans will sooner or later develop an effective shared border policy. In the long run, the territorial imperative will assert itself. There is, after all, no moral duty to destroy oneself.”

The enforcement of “territorial imperatives” against the “self-destruction” of the nation! The historical tradition of such reactionary ideas and conceptions is so obvious that even the *Tagesspiegel* noted: “Talk of ‘territorial

imperatives’ sounds impressive but what exactly is meant by this remains unclear. A return to geopolitics? The Wilhelmine politicians believed Germany would have to arm itself because of its central position, later because of so-called Lebensraum.”

In fact, the return to “geopolitics” and the (violent) pursuit of “territorial imperatives”—or to put it another way, the economic and strategic interests of German imperialism—has long been the policy of the German government. Two years after President Joachim Gauck and the federal government announced the end to military restraint at the 2014 Munich Security Conference, Germany has made a further step toward the revival of militarism with its combat missions in Syria and Mali and recently announced plans for rearmament.

The sealing-off of borders and the brutal rejection of refugees has long been the policy of the German government with regard to Europe’s external borders. On Monday, *Spiegel Online* published an article on the inhumane measures with which the Erdogan regime in Turkey acts, above all, in the service of Berlin against refugees from Syria. Under the title “Refugee deal with Turkey—‘Europe’s doorman’”, the news magazine wrote: “The official transit junctions are effectively closed. Soon a wall three meters high and 200 kilometres long will seal the country off from refugees.”

The authors add: “Soldiers patrol the border near the city of Antakya on a January afternoon. Tanks roll between checkpoints. In the distance, bombs from the Syrian war zone can be heard. The refugees use hidden paths through the forest and over hills.” Several Syrians were “arrested by Turkish security forces, some of them abused and deported back to Syria.”

The “lethal response” demanded by the AfD has, in effect, long been enforced along Europe’s external borders. In the last year alone, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported 3,771 refugees, including many women and children, drowned in the Mediterranean while fleeing war zones destroyed by the West. As a result of Germany’s isolationist policy, this number will rise dramatically.



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