

German chancellor demands loyalty from Turkish citizens in Germany

Christoph Vandreier
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The return of Germany to an aggressive foreign policy is being accompanied by the racist stigmatising of entire sections of the population. Islamophobic campaigns against the burka and other religious symbols are combined with attacks on Turkish citizens in Germany who allegedly fail to recognise “German values.”

German Chancellor Angela Merkel (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) intensified the agitation on Tuesday. She told the *Ruhr Nachrichten*, “We expect those of Turkish origin who have been living in Germany for a long time develop a high degree of loyalty to our country.”

She thus made into government policy the deeply antidemocratic demand for loyalty towards the state raised by numerous politicians for weeks. Volker Kauder, CDU/CSU (Christian Social Union) parliamentary group leader, declared at the beginning of August that “citizens of Turkish origin” had to adapt to “our customs.”

The trigger was a demonstration of tens of thousands of people in late July against the attempted coup in Turkey on July 15. The German government sees its interests in the Middle East threatened by a consolidation of the authoritarian regime of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and responded with bans and a hysterical campaign against Turkish Germans.

The campaign recalls the darkest chapters of German history. An aggressive German foreign policy has always been accompanied by the stigmatising of entire ethnic or cultural groups suspected of making a pact with the enemy. The industrial annihilation of European Jewry was in part justified by the Nazis on the basis of their alleged support for the Soviet Union.

Under conditions where the political coordinates in

the Middle East are shifting rapidly and German imperialism is re-emerging on the world stage, Turkish and Arab minorities are in its sights. Militarism abroad finds its corollary in racism domestically.

The editor of the right-wing *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Berthold Kohler, directly took up racist conceptions from the past in a comment on Merkel’s remarks on loyalty, stating that Germany had nothing to offer disloyal immigrants in Germany.

Kohler enthused over how loyalty is being promoting in Germany and that foreigners are the target of agitation. In the past, one would unfortunately have been accused of a “crypto-fascist violation of human rights.” ... “Since at that time, social engineers were supposed to heal the all-too German essence with multiculturalism,” he wrote.

This is a revealing choice of words. Apparently the FAZ editor is appealing for the degree of openness and integration of other cultures in Germany which has taken place under the conception of multiculturalism, to be replaced by the slogan “Germany’s essence shall heal the world,” the slogan which previously served as propaganda for German imperialism in preparing the First World War.

Kohler leaves no doubt about this interpretation. According to him, “indigenous Germans” should not adapt to the “laws and customs” of other cultures. “Indigenous” essentially means “born into” and is most frequently used in reference to the oppressed peoples of the Americas. That Kohler employs this concept has a clear biological connotation. His definition of an allegedly homogeneous German group, which he counterpoises to immigrants, is explicit racism unseen with such clarity in modern mainstream German media.

On the basis of this racist concept, he demands that all those not of “German” origin accept “the basic

values and basic laws of the German community.” “Germany has nothing to offer those who do not want to do so, especially when behind this refusal [stands] contempt for Western values.”

The question inevitably arises: what basic German does Kohler mean? Is it the racist nostrums of the Nazis? Is it the historic crimes of German imperialism in the First and above all Second World War? Or the bombardment of Yugoslavia, the massacre of civilians, including women and children, in Kunduz, or the backing of a fascist coup in Ukraine that cost the lives of thousands of people?

The values to which Kohler and Merkel are referring become clear when one examines the government’s strategy papers, or several articles authored by the FAZ editor. In February last year, Kohler demanded a nuclear deterrent in order to prevent Russia from taking over Kiev. He baldly called for “the west to be ready to escalate, and in the worst case faster than the Russians.”

In the new White Paper on defence policy, the German government confirmed it will strengthen its armed forces and intervene to secure “the land, air and sea crossings, as well as cyber-, information- and outer-space.” In addition, it seeks to facilitate the domestic deployment of the Bundeswehr.

This imperialist policy confronts broad opposition from the majority of the population. This is why the campaign for “loyalty towards the state” is now being waged. It is aimed not only at stoking racism and playing off groups against each other, but also to establish authoritarian forms of rule. Militarism and democracy are incompatible.

This was summed up in another comment published by the FAZ on Thursday. In it, Jasper von Altenbockum, the paper’s domestic affairs editor, argued that “citizenship” existed because “the state has to know who supports it and, in extreme cases, on whom it can rely.”

If this is irrelevant to many citizens or if they even “oppose it in the name of freedom, culture or religion,” a “creeping anarchy” threatens. Altenbockum therefore recommends closing Germany’s borders, reintroducing compulsory military service and sacrificing freedoms for “security.”

Along with German militarism, the traditions of the authoritarian state and chauvinism are re-emerging. The

Partei für Soziale Gleichheit (Socialist Equality Party, PSG) firmly rejects such authoritarian and militarist policies. The loyalty of class-conscious workers does not belong to the state, but to their brothers and sisters in Germany and all over the world. It is expressed in a joint struggle against the ruling elite’s preparations for war.



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