

Police state preparations in Dresden for German Unity Day

Marianne Arens and Ulrich Rippert
3 October 2016

This weekend marked the start of the annual celebration of the anniversary of German reunification in 1990. The central ceremony is to be held in Dresden. On Monday, Federal President Joachim Gauck will attend the main event at the International Congress Center in the capital city of the state of Saxony.

At the beginning of last week, two bombs exploded in Dresden—one at the entrance to the Fatih Camii mosque in the city's Cotta district, the other at the Congress Center, close to the parliament. Since then, a state of emergency has prevailed in Dresden and the city resembles a police fortress.

Some 2,600 police officers have been mobilised, including a special unit of the Saxony police and the elite GSG 9 force. Over 3,800 meters of lattice fences have been erected, 50 vehicle roadblocks set up, and 1,400 large concrete blocks put in place to block access roads to the ceremony sites.

Police have commenced random identity checks in the city centre at night, and all state offices and Muslim institutions have an increased police presence. In the run-up to Unification Day, no-fly zones are to be established, applying even to drones, while the river Elbe will be closed to vessels.

The September 26 bombings have been used to organise an unprecedented police state operation. Who is behind the attacks remains unclear. At both crime scenes the remains of improvised explosive devices were found. Nobody was injured.

Some of the circumstances point in the direction of the involvement of the far right. The attacks came shortly after the end of a march by the ultra-right anti-immigrant Pegida movement in Dresden. A wing of that movement, which recently split off from the main organization, demonstrated in front of the central train station, not far from the mosque.

Süddeutsche Zeitung pointed out that the attack took place exactly 36 years to the day of the fascist bombing of Germany's traditional Oktoberfest. The emergency call from the Convention Centre coincided to the minute with the time of that previous bombing in Munich: 22:19.

The attack on the mosque is part of a seemingly endless list of far-right atrocities directed primarily against refugees and immigrants. In just the first eight-and-a-half months of this year, more than 1,800 xenophobic attacks were officially recorded, including 78 cases of arson and seven homicides.

In nearby Bautzen, refugees were hounded by right-wing mobs just two weeks ago while the police aligned themselves with the neo-fascists against the refugees.

Compared to last year, the number of right-wing attacks on immigrants has almost doubled. For several months attacks on mosques have been increasing, very few of which have been prosecuted. A total of 20 politically motivated attacks against mosques have been officially registered this year. These attacks have ranged from defilement with abattoir waste or feces to explosive and arson attacks, as in the recent case in Dresden.

At the beginning of the year, political circles and the media demanded drastic reprisals against Muslim immigrants involved in alleged crimes in the so-called "New Year's Eve events" in Cologne. In the case of the far right, however, little is done. Last year, the police recorded 75 cases of violence against Muslim institutions but laid charges in just 16.

Once again, following the latest attack on the mosque in Dresden, the police remained passive. They first went public Tuesday morning, more than 10 hours after the attack. Saxon Interior Minister Markus Ulbig of the Christian Democratic Union declared that

investigations were being conducted “in all directions.”

On Wednesday, Ulbig presented “evidence” of responsibility—a note that appeared on the Internet portal linksunten.indymedia.org, which is affiliated to the anti-fascist Antifa movement in Dresden. The barely literate note declared that fireworks had been stockpiled for German Unity Day, targeting the International Congress Centre and the Islamist God’s House. The text ended with the declaration: “Nationalism is not an alternative, Antifa means attack!” It was signed “3oct.net.”

The Antifa group in Dresden immediately removed the note from its web site and denied any responsibility for the text or the bombing attacks. The attorney general’s office has stated that it regards the claim of responsibility to be a forgery.

Whether the perpetrators and those behind the attacks will ever be found is unclear. But two things are indisputable: first, the attacks were immediately used to organize a large-scale state security maneuver, which had been planned in advance. Second, the far-right milieu in Saxony has been heavily infiltrated by the domestic intelligence service (euphemistically known as Protection of the Constitution) and is monitored, if not controlled, by government security agencies.

Zwickau is the fourth largest city in Saxony. Between 2000 and 2007 the city was home to the far-right NSU (National Socialist Underground) terror gang, whose brutal killing spree claimed the lives of nine immigrants and a policewoman. In addition, the group carried out three bombing attacks and 14 bank robberies.

It is now known that at least 25 undercover agents of the Protection of the Constitution were active around the NSU and helped finance the ultra-right milieu. At the beginning of November 2011, as police moved in on the group, a member of the NSU, Beate Zschäpe, blew up their apartment in Zwickau. Shortly before, she tried to call someone.

On May 29, 2012, the *Berliner Kurier* reported: “The incriminating factor: The number she called was registered to the Saxon State Ministry of the Interior. To whom from the authorities in Dresden did Zschäpe want to talk, and, above all, why?”

The newspaper rang the phone number and was met with silence. Since then the authorities have denied the intimate links between the intelligence services and far-

right terrorism.

On Monday, President Gauck will give a Unity Day speech in a city armed to the teeth. Three years ago, he took advantage of the same occasion to make his “Great Power” speech, in which he demanded that Germany again play a role “in Europe and the world” commensurate with its size and influence. “In a world full of crises and upheavals,” he declared, Germany had to have an active political and military policy.

This was followed by the pronouncements from Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Defence Minister Ursula von der Leyen that the period of military restraint for Germany was over. Since then, an intensive military build-up has been taking place, with the German government playing an increasingly active political and military role in international conflicts, especially in Ukraine and the Middle East.

All of the established parties and the media have lined up solidly behind the war policies of the government. They engage in a propaganda barrage whose uniformity resembles that of a dictatorship. The monitoring and repressive apparatus of the state is being systematically upgraded and expanded to nip any opposition in the bud,

The refugee crisis has been used to foment racism and xenophobia and poison the political climate. Dresden became the centre of demonstrations by the far-right Pegida movement that were hyped and promoted by the media as the protests of “concerned citizens.”

Whatever unctuous phrases about freedom and democracy German President Gauck uses to garnish his sermon on Monday, the events surrounding Unity Day in Dresden demonstrate that the return of militarism is linked to the creation of the framework of a police state.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact