

German Interior Minister Seehofer backs the brown mob

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Ten days after a brown mob, undisturbed by the police, marched through the streets of Chemnitz, Germany, chasing down people with a different skin colour and giving the Hitler salute, there can no longer be any doubt that they have support at the highest levels of the state.

Politicians of every stripe—from Alternative for Germany (AfD) leader Alexander Gauland to Left Party fraction leader Sahra Wagenknecht—have spread the myth that the mob was made up of “concerned citizens,” driven into the streets by their fear of social competition and a supposed crime wave caused by foreigners—people who must be “taken seriously.” In reality, the neo-Nazis and their milieu dare to behave so brazenly only because the government and security services fully support them.

In recent days, Interior Minister Horst Seehofer has left no doubt about this. He had kept silent about the events in Chemnitz, but he finally spoke up on Wednesday during a closed-door meeting of the Christian Social Union (CSU), at which he defended the right-wing extremist demonstration. He expressed understanding for the right-wing mob, whose march, documented in numerous videos, shocked the entire world.

Seehofer said he understands “that the population is troubled, that it is angered by these crimes.” He added that the people should know “that one understands such outrage following such a brutal crime.” In an interview the next day with the *Rheinische Post* he was even more open in his support for the fascistic mob. “If I weren’t a minister,” he said, “I too would have taken to the streets as a citizen.”

Seehofer did not stop there. He sought to outdo from the right the xenophobic propaganda of the AfD. “The immigration question is the mother of all political

problems in this country,” he declared. “I’ve been saying this for three years. Many people now link their social concerns to the immigration question.”

Most refugees have fled wars and catastrophes for which Germany and NATO share responsibility. Now Seehofer is seeking to make them scapegoats for the consequences of decades of social cuts by all of Germany’s federal governments. In a similar manner, the Nazis once proclaimed the Jews to be the cause of all social and political problems. AfD leader Alexander Gauland was full of praise for the interior minister. “Seehofer is absolutely correct in his analysis,” he told the *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung*.

Previously, the minister president of Saxony, Michael Kretschmer (Christian Democratic Union—CDU), solidarized himself with the far-right protests in Chemnitz. “There was no mob, there was no chase, there was no pogrom in Chemnitz,” he said before the state parliament in Dresden.

Seehofer is not a marginal political figure, but a central player in German politics. He was the minister of health for six years under Helmut Kohl during the 1990s. Under Angela Merkel, he was head of the ministry of agriculture for three years. He was subsequently the minister president of Bavaria for ten years. Since March of this year, he has been responsible for the police and domestic security as the minister of the interior. Moreover, since 2008 he has been chairman of the Bavarian CSU, the third-largest governing party.

That Seehofer now openly stands with the mob in Chemnitz vindicates everything the Socialist Equality Party of Germany has written about the right-wing character of the Grand Coalition government. It is pursuing a program of military rearmament and social cuts. Hardly a week goes by without the disclosure of

new plans for increased military spending and for interventions in the Middle East, Africa and on the Russian border.

“There is no support for this policy in the population,” we wrote in a leaflet at the beginning of the week, “This is why official politics takes the form of a conspiracy at the highest level of the state, in which the opposition parties—the Greens, the Left Party and the Free Democratic Party (FDP)—are also involved ... As soon as the German ruling class embarks on an imperialist great power policy and feels resistance from below, it once again moves to the extreme right.”

What alarms the government is the massive opposition to the right-wing march. In Chemnitz, 70,000 people came to a “Rock Against the Right” concert, ten times the number of people mobilized by the right-wing extremists, and thousands more demonstrated against the right in other cities. In Hamburg, a mere 178 people came to a far-right demonstration on Wednesday, to which high-ranking representatives of the AfD and Pegida travelled from other states. In contrast, 10,000 people answered the call for a counter-demonstration.

The government responds to this growing opposition by strengthening the AfD and building up the state. Seehofer told the *Rheinische Post*, “If we don’t manage to change course and place the order of humanity on an equal footing, we will lose more trust.” The majority in Europe want “order, control and boundaries,” he added. As an example, he pointed to Austria and Italy, where the extreme right is in power. Seehofer said he would fight every day for “rapid implementation of the master plan on immigration.”

This master plan, to which the Grand Coalition has agreed, provides for the brutal sealing-off of “Fortress Europe,” along with national measures for border control, the establishment of closed camps for refugees in Germany and throughout Europe, and mass deportations to Africa and the war zones of the Middle East. It is bound up with a dramatic expansion of the powers of the security authorities and the abolition of basic democratic rights.

The new “Report on the Protection of the Constitution,” which appeared at the end of July, including a foreword by Seehofer, also bears the fingerprints of the AfD. It makes no mention of that party or its far-right extremist milieu, but labels any

opposition to nationalism, imperialism and militarism as “left-wing extremist” and “anti-constitutional.” For Seehofer and the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, it is not the neo-Nazis, but their opponents, i.e., the great majority of the population, who are the real enemy.

None of the parties represented in the Bundestag [parliament] opposes these dangerous developments. As a member of the Grand Coalition, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) lends them its full support. FDP leader Christian Lindner declared that Seehofer’s statements were “certainly true, but too narrowly conceived.” The Greens have long been committed militarists, for whom the foreign policy of the federal government is insufficiently aggressive. And Left Party parliamentary fraction leader Sahra Wagenknecht has just launched the “Stand Up” movement, praised by the AfD for its nationalist and anti-refugee politics.

The only social force that can fight these developments and stop the right wing is the international working class. The Socialist Equality Party calls for the expansion of the class struggle across Europe. As the German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, it is building a socialist party that unites the fight against war and fascism with the fight against capitalism.



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