

German neo-Nazis attack Jewish restaurant during far-right riot in Chemnitz

Alex Lantier**11 September 2018**

On August 27, during a far-right riot in the eastern German city of Chemnitz, a dozen neo-Nazis attacked Schalom, a kosher restaurant, shouting anti-Semitic slogans. Masked and dressed in black, they shouted, “Leave Germany you Jewish pig,” while throwing stones, bottles and metal tubes at the restaurant’s storefront.

Uwe Dziuballa, the owner of the restaurant, filmed the attack, during which the façade was damaged and Dziuballa suffered wounds to his shoulder, and filed a complaint with police.

It took place during two days of neo-Nazi riots in Chemnitz after the still unresolved murder of a 35-year-old German of Cuban origin who had “liked” anti-Nazi social media posts and made statements critical of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD).

Police authorities in Saxony hushed up the attack against Schalom, which only came to light in media reports in *Die Welt* over the weekend. However, the regional interior ministry of Saxony did not deny press reports of the attack and confirmed that “for the time being, a politically-motivated act with an anti-Semitic background seems the most plausible.”

Felix Klein, the German federal government’s official tasked with monitoring anti-Semitism, drew a parallel with the persecution of the Jews under the Nazi regime in the 1930s, before the fascist mass murder of European Jewry during World War II. He said, “That masked neo-Nazis come together and attack in cold blood an institution they take to be Jewish, such things we have not seen in recent years. It is a new level in anti-Semitic criminality. If in Jewish restaurants or businesses, storefront windows are smashed, then this recalls pictures we remember from the 1930s.”

Asked about the police’s decision not to report the neo-Nazi assault, Klein added, “It is serious that the

police did not recognize the explosive character of such an anti-Semitic act.”

The racist attack, which irrefutably shows that the promotion of nationalism and far-right parties in Germany and across Europe strengthens fascist forces, drew condemnation from Jewish organizations. “The racist cries and the attack on the kosher restaurant in Chemnitz show how deeply rooted far-right extremism is in this region,” commented Josef Schuster, the head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

Charlotte Knobloch, former president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, said, “A state with the rule of law should not tolerate that groups committing violence march through the streets and terrorize people that they consider to be of lesser value.”

Schuster denounced the responsibility of leading state officials who reacted to the Chemnitz riots by downplaying their significance. He said, “We must call the problem by its right name. This is what I expect from everyone who is responsible for domestic security in Germany. It is five past midnight.”

He warned, “I cannot understand the attempts by certain politicians and representatives of the security services to downplay the situation in Chemnitz. The attempts of the constitutional authorities to publicly trivialize these incidents leads me to seriously doubt the work of these officials.”

The attack on Schalom is a devastating exposure of the role of domestic intelligence agencies and state officials of all political colorations in Germany. As the German ruling elite sought to justify its unpopular policy of remilitarizing its foreign policy and boosting military spending in line with NATO demands, its political and academic mouthpieces endlessly insisted that it should “get over” the crimes of 20th century European fascism. NATO officials called Germany a

“lost nation” because of popular opposition to military spending. German academics like Jörg Barberowski insisted that Hitler “was not a psychopath, he was not cruel,” because “He did not want the extermination of the Jews to be talked about at his table.”

This constant outpouring of reactionary militarist propaganda, in Germany and beyond, has created a rancid political atmosphere in which far-right forces can mount anti-Semitic violence and receive cover from top state officials.

Before the report emerged in *Die Welt*, Hans-Georg Maassen, the head of the secret service (BfV), cast doubt on reports of far-right attacks in Chemnitz: “I share the skepticism toward media reports of right-wing extremists hunting people down in Chemnitz. The secret service has no reliable information about such actions having taken place.”

He dismissed videos of far-right protesters attacking Afghan refugees, saying, “There is no evidence that the video circulating on the Internet about this alleged incident is authentic.”

While Maassen was claiming that there was no evidence of far-right attacks in Chemnitz, police were covering up a documented anti-Semitic attack by neo-Nazis.

Amid mass shock and outrage at the neo-fascist rampage in Chemnitz, Interior Minister Horst Seehofer of the Christian Social Union (CSU) backed the far-right mob. He demanded that people “understand such outrage following such a brutal crime” as the murder of the 35-year-old German citizen. He unambiguously declared his support for the Chemnitz rioters: “If I weren’t a minister, I too would have taken to the streets as a citizen.”

While the Left Party’s Sahra Wagenknecht called the far-right protesters in Chemnitz “concerned citizens,” Saxony’s Minister-President Michael Kretschmer (Christian-Democratic Union, CDU) said that he agreed with Chemnitz Mayor Barbara Ludwig (Social-Democratic Party, SPD) that people must “come to terms” with the Chemnitz riot. Kretschmer proposed not to “pillory those who took to the streets out of anger, disappointment and sympathy, and wanted to articulate their feelings. They are not right-wing extremists and we stand by them, ladies and gentlemen.”

Whether or not Kretschmer knew that the rioters

included neo-Nazis attacking Jewish businesses as he decided to stand by them, this statement constitutes a warning as to the fascistic course being taken by the entire political establishment.



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