

New police raids and Europe-wide manhunt against G20 opponents

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In a major raid in three federal states, police searched a total of 15 apartments yesterday morning and arrested one person. According to the police, the action was directed against suspects who were said to have participated in riots on the periphery of the G20 summit in Hamburg in July last year.

While the police have massively cracked down on the G20 demonstrators for over a year, even those suspected of merely having thrown a bottle, entire groups of neo-Nazis in Chemnitz, Köthen and other cities witch-hunt migrants, journalists and left-wingers and receive cover from the highest levels of the state apparatus.

On Tuesday, a 35-year-old man from Hamburg's Winterhude district was arrested. He was supposedly known to the police before the G20 summit and involved in riots in the Schanzenviertel. According to the *Hamburger Morgenpost*, he is accused of having thrown stones and bottles 19 times and looted two supermarkets. Apartments were searched in Schleswig-Holstein and North Rhine-Westphalia, and also in Dortmund. However, there were no further arrests.

According to police, the searches involved more than 10 suspects. They are said to have participated in riots in the Schanzenviertel as well as in the "Welcome to Hell" demonstration. They are accused, *inter alia*, of serious breaches of the peace, resisting law enforcement officers, assault and the plundering of supermarkets. According to Hamburg police spokesman Timo Zill, all the suspects had long been in the sights of the investigators. The police confiscated computers and cell phones, among other things.

Yesterday, the Hamburg police also launched a pan-European search for four alleged "violent criminals." They are said to have been involved in setting fire to cars on the Elbchaussee on July 7, 2017. Those being

sought are three men and one woman; one of the men is suspected of living mainly in France. The head of the special commission "Black Block," Jan Hieber, said that the suspects' activities were a "commando action"—a term usually attributed to terrorists like the Red Army Faction.

Significantly, the police also published several photos that supposedly show the wanted persons. The police spokesman rushed to emphasize that their publication had been approved by the court following an application by the state prosecutor's office. Last December, in cooperation with *Bild* newspaper, the police had already published photos of hundreds of demonstrators and thus massively infringed their personal rights. As the WSWs wrote at the time, "Nothing comparable has taken place since the founding of the German Federal Republic." The action was so scandalous that even many bourgeois commentators declared the behaviour of the police "unlawful."

The massive police crackdown on alleged rioters is completely disproportionate. It serves to justify the further massive increase in the powers of the security apparatus and to prepare for the persecution and suppression of all left-wing protests. The violence surrounding the G20 summit was largely provoked by the police and then exaggerated in the media. All the horror stories in the police reports, leaked unchecked by the media, turned out to be lies.

For example, no evidence has been found to support the claim that protesters sought to throw stones and Molotov cocktails from roof tops. Despite intensive searches and a forensic investigation, the police have not been able to present any such objects, and despite comprehensive video surveillance, they are not able to definitively document their use. In fact, many of those

who were on roofs or scaffolding were found to be film crews or curious onlookers.

A few weeks after allegations that the police had had “masses of bottles, bollards, and firecrackers deliberately thrown at them” from the ranks of a demonstration, as the police report said, a police video was leaked that refuted the story completely. The video clearly showed that there was no use of force against the police, but that the police in turn ran towards the demonstrators, who were shot at from the rear with water cannons.

Meanwhile, it is also known that the police themselves had infiltrated numerous provocateurs into the counter-protests of the G20 summit. During a court case against a G20 protester in May, a plainclothes police officer from a Saxony Police Arrest Unit interviewed as a witness said he and three other colleagues had disguised themselves among the demonstrators of the “Welcome to Hell” demo. They had dressed in dark clothes and “pulled up a black scarf under their nose,” *Der Spiegel* reported from the trial. “We got a clothing subsidy for such garments from our employer,” the police officer told the court. The Hamburg head of the German police union, Joachim Lenders, described the infiltrating of plainclothes police officers into left-wing demonstrations at the time as “common practice.”

The “Welcome to Hell” demo took place five days before the G20 summit and was violently broken up by the police after only a few hundred metres because some of the participants had their faces covered. This procedure then served as a pretext for a brutal police crackdown on peaceful demonstrators at numerous other protests. In the style of a civil war exercise, more than 20,000 police officers from all over Germany had been gathered in Hamburg, turning the city into a veritable garrison and suspending numerous basic rights. Among other things, numerous journalists were briefly deprived of their accreditation.

In the weeks following the summit, these “acts of violence” by alleged “left-wing extremists” were then used as a pretext to prepare an unprecedented campaign against “left-wingers.” Among other things, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas, at that time still justice minister, had called for a “Rock against the left” concert. The fact that right-wing extremist groups such as the youth organization of the German National Party (NPD) and

the “hooligans against Salafists” had called for participation in the protests—and numerous neo-Nazis had participated in them—did not come up.

The new “constitutional protection report” drawn up by the secret service, published a few weeks ago, makes clear that the narrative about supposed left-wing riots on the periphery of the G20 summit hides the real motive: to criminalize left-wing politics as being anti-constitutional and to portray the G20 protesters as fanatical left-wing extremists. “The emphases of left-wing extremist agitation” in 2017 were “decisively” influenced by the summit. The “violence against police officers and the extent of street crimes practiced there” are “striking examples of the attitude prevailing among violent left-wing extremists towards violence,” reads the introductory section on “Left-Wing Extremism.”

Since then, this portrayal of the G20 protests has been used to criminalize any left-wing opposition. This year, for example, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) was named for the first time in the secret service report, even though there is no accusation it has been involved in any violent action. Just a few weeks after the G20 summit, the then-Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière had used the events in Hamburg as an opportunity to ban the left-wing website linksunten.indymedia.



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