

German government celebrates “unity day” under the shadow of renewed neo-fascist movement

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On Wednesday, the German state celebrated the 28th anniversary of the unification of East and West Germany on October 3, 1990. The event was met with honeyed phrases by politicians about a “united, democratic Germany.” But these words could not hide the fact that the danger of fascism is returning to Germany 85 years after Hitler was installed in power.

For the first time since the founding of the post-war Federal Republic of Germany, a far-right party is represented in the Bundestag (federal parliament) that maintains close relations with militant neo-Nazis. And on Monday, the federal prosecutor’s office ordered the arrest of seven members of a radical right-wing terrorist group called “Revolution Chemnitz.” In addition to attacks on foreigners and left-wingers, they are accused of having planned an armed “action” for the Day of German Unity and of seeking to foment a radical right-wing uprising.

According to the Federal Public Prosecutor’s Office, the defendants made intensive efforts to obtain firearms. A month ago, they were involved in the riots and protests in Chemnitz, where neo-Nazi thugs hunted down foreigners on the streets, made the Hitler salute and attacked a Jewish restaurant. A bloody attack on immigrants in a Chemnitz Park on September 14 was a test run for an “action” on German Unity Day, said the Attorney General.

In addition to Chemnitz, neo-Nazi marches took place in Köthen and Dortmund in recent weeks, reminiscent of the darkest period in German history. Unlike the 1930s, the Nazis today are not a mass movement, but a hated minority. But that does not make them any less dangerous.

Above all, they derive their strength from the support

they receive from above—first and foremost from the state apparatus, the intelligence service and the police, but also from the government and the policies of the establishment parties. The aggressive and provocative actions of violent neo-Nazis are the result of a dangerous development that has been politically and ideologically prepared for several years.

Five years ago, in his speech on German Unity Day, German President Joachim Gauck announced on behalf of the entire ruling class the return to an aggressive German foreign and great power policy.

Germany must again play a role “in Europe and in the world,” which really corresponds to its size and its influence, demanded Gauck. Germany was “populous, in the middle of the continent and the fourth-largest economic power in the world” and should no longer “indulge in the illusion that we could be spared political and economic and military conflicts, if we do not participate in their solution.”

At the same time, the German political establishment began a comprehensive campaign to trivialize the crimes of German imperialism. In February 2014, 100 years after the outbreak of the First World War, 75 years after the outbreak of the Second World War and 25 years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, newsweekly *Der Spiegel* argued that the question of “German guilt” should be reassessed.

The article “World War I Guilt: Culpability Question Divides Historians Today” was based on interviews with two professors at Berlin’s Humboldt University: Herfried Münkler described the claim that Germany was guilty of World War I as a “legend”, and Jörg Baberowski defended the Nazi apologist Ernst Nolte and claimed that Hitler was “not vicious” because he

“did not want to talk about the extermination of the Jews at his table.”

The Socialist Equality Party (SGP) commented at the time: “The propaganda of the post-war era—that Germany had learnt from the terrible crimes of the Nazis, had ‘arrived at the West,’ had embraced a peaceful foreign policy, and had developed into a stable democracy—is exposed as lies. German imperialism is once again showing its real colours as it emerged historically, with all of its aggressiveness at home and abroad.”

This has since been confirmed. Gauck’s speech and the attempts to revise German history heralded a systematic campaign for a return to militarism and great-power politics, preparing the ideological ground for the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) and the neo-Nazis. In the 1930s, ruling circles had responded to the profound crisis of capitalism by bringing Hitler to power to smash the workers’ movement and expand Germany’s military strength. They are moving in the same direction today.

The neo-Nazi march in Chemnitz was openly defended by the then head of the secret service Hans-Georg Maassen and federal Interior Minister Horst Seehofer. While Maassen denied that foreigners had been hunted down on the streets, Seehofer said he would have marched in Chemnitz if he was not a minister. The “immigration issue” is the “mother of all political problems in this country,” he added, in words reminiscent of the AfD’s demagoguery.

The AfD is being courted in the Bundestag. With its decision to continue the discredited grand coalition with the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU), the Social Democrats (SPD) handed the AfD the role of leader of the official opposition, even though it received just 12.6 percent of the votes in the general election. In parliament, all parties work closely with the AfD, to whom they have granted chairmanship of important committees.

The reason is not difficult to understand. The SPD is one of those agitating for a more aggressive foreign policy. Former Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel and his successor Heiko Maas (both SPD) never tire of emphasizing that Germany must understand the conflict with the US as an “opportunity” to pursue great power politics once more.

The Greens and the Left Party are not to be outdone

by the SPD. The Greens became a party of German militarism ever since they ensured that the first war effort of the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) went ahead in 1999 in Yugoslavia against fierce popular resistance. And the Left Party drops its pacifist phrases as soon as it comes to asserting Germany’s interests against her economic rivals and, above all, the US.

Because militarism is hated and finds little support in the population, official politics are increasingly taking the form of a permanent conspiracy. To defend its wealth against the growing opposition of the working class, to build an authoritarian state and to rebuild Germany into a leading military force capable of defending its imperialist interests in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, the ruling class needs the far-right.

There is only one way to stop the revival of militarism and fascism in Germany: the mobilization of the international working class based on a revolutionary program and the building of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) and the Fourth International as a socialist mass party. Our demands are:

- * Stop the conspiracy of the grand coalition, the state apparatus and right-wing extremists!

- * For new elections and the mobilization of the working class on the basis of an international socialist program!

- * No more war! Stop Germany’s return to aggressive great power politics!

- * Abolish the secret service and immediately cease monitoring the SGP and other left-wing organizations!

- * Defend the right to asylum! No to increased state powers and surveillance!

- * End poverty and exploitation—for social equality! The wealth of the financial oligarchy, the banks and major corporations must be expropriated and placed under democratic control!



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