

German Nazi murders two in Yom Kippur Synagogue attack

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The attack by a Nazi killer on the synagogue in Halle has left two people dead and several injured. Carried out on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, the murderous rampage was intended to demonstrate that anti-Semitism remains a significant political force in Germany. The attack demonstrates, in a horrific manner, the dark political reality in Germany: Almost 75 years after the fall of the Third Reich, the country has, once again, a serious Nazi and anti-Semitic problem, which has led to death and serious injury.

It is clear that the assassinations in Halle were right-wing extremist terror attacks. The suspect is 27-year-old Stephan Balliet from Saxony-Anhalt, who has since been arrested. His rampage recalls that of the right-wing Australian-born terrorist Brenton Tarrant, who attacked two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand last March, killing 51 people. Like Tarrant, Balliet was heavily armed and wore a helmet and army clothing. He filmed his bloody rampage and transmitted it via livestream to the internet.

The more than 30-minute video shows Balliet shooting a passer-by near Halle's Jewish cemetery, and a guest in a kebab shop near the synagogue. Previously, the right-wing terrorist had tried to enter the Jewish religious building in order to kill the 70 to 80 worshippers there. On the run, Balliet injured two other people in Landsberg, Saxony.

Max Privorozki, chairman of the Jewish community in Halle, told the news magazine *Spiegel Online* how his community barely escaped a massacre: "The perpetrator shot several times at the door and threw several Molotov cocktails, firecrackers or grenades to penetrate it. But the door stayed shut; God protected us. The whole thing lasted maybe five to ten minutes."

The video shows that the assassin acted out of hatred for foreigners and Jews. According to media reports, he

repeatedly scolded "Kanaken," denied the Holocaust and made extremely anti-Semitic statements in his poor English.

Despite the holiday, the synagogue was not protected by police. Balliet was able to shoot for minutes, murder two people and drive away undisturbed, before police arrived.

Josef Schuster, chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, noted, "It's a shocking experience, but it's a development we've warned against in recent years." Parts of society have drifted to the extreme right; words have been followed by deeds. He saw what has happened "not as an isolated case, but as a clear development."

Responsibility for this bloody deed lies with the ruling class. The hypocritical expressions of condolence by Chancellor Angela Merkel (CDU) and President Frank-Walter Steinmeier (SPD) last evening cannot conceal this fact. In recent years, the entire ruling class, along with the media, have systematically created the ideological climate and political conditions for right-wing terror.

In tandem with the AfD it has built up a right-wing extremist party, whose chairman Alexander Gauland glorifies the Wehrmacht and describes Hitler and the crimes of the Nazis as mere "bird shit in over 1000 years of successful German history." The grand coalition has made the AfD the official leader of the parliamentary opposition since the 2017 federal elections, integrated it into the parliamentary framework and adopted its refugee policy one-to-one.

At the same time, it allows the radical right-wing terrorist networks, which reach deep into the army, police and secret services, maintaining death lists, with the names of several thousand targeted persons, to operate almost unharmed. As in the case of the series of

murders committed by the neo-Nazi National Socialist Underground (NSU), the recent case of Kassel District President Walter Lübcke (CDU), who was murdered in May, revealed how close the links are between the state—and, in particular the Office for the Protection of the Constitution—and the right-wing terrorists.

According to the official statistics of the Federal Criminal Police Office, a total of 497 right-wing extremists remain at large, although arrest warrants have been issued against them.

As in the Weimar Republic, the ruling class primarily uses the rearmament of the state apparatus, which is shot through with right-wing extremist elements, to intensify action against the left.

In the current report of the *Verfassungsschutz* (Office for the Protection of the Constitution), the Interior Ministry's secret service, the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party—SGP) has, for the second time in a row, been listed as an “object of observation,” because it fights against right-wing extremism and advocates a socialist program that, according to the accusation of the secret service, is directed “against alleged nationalism, imperialism and militarism.” Mass protests against the AfD, such as the “Rock against the Right” concert in Chemnitz last September, have also been defamed as “left-wing extremist” by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution.

The right-wing offensive is supported by influential university academics who, as in the Third Reich under the Nazis, play a key role in the ideological preparation for dictatorship and war.

At the end of August, Bernhard Kempen, chairman of the German Association of University Professors and Lecturers (Deutscher Hochschulverband), gave a television interview backing the right-wing radical historian Jörg Baberowski. Kempen denounced any criticism of Baberowski's anti-refugee viewpoint and apologetics for the Nazis (“Hitler was not vicious”) as “terrorism of opinion and conviction” [“Meinungs- und Gessinnungsterrorismus”]. Most recently, Baberowski failed to establish a centre for dictatorship research at the Humboldt University in Berlin, due to the immense opposition of the student body.

Five years ago, the SGP warned of the consequences of the return of German militarism at a Special Conference Against War in Berlin. Only a few months

after Steinmeier, then Foreign Minister, had declared at the Munich Security Conference in 2014, that Germany was “too big to merely comment on world politics from the sidelines,” we analysed the objective driving forces behind the return of German militarism, and explained:

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.

Five years later, this assessment is being dramatically confirmed. The far-right terror in Halle aims to establish anti-Semitism and Nazism, once again, as an influential political force in Germany. It is being used by the ruling class, as in the 1930s, to arm the oppressive state apparatus, advance militarism and suppress growing social and political resistance.

The only social force that can stop the fascist danger and a relapse into barbarism is the international working class. For this, it needs a socialist program and its own mass party. The central question is the construction of the SGP and the International Committee of the Fourth International as the new revolutionary leadership of the international working class.



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