

Sharp rise in right-wing extremist and anti-Semitic violence in Germany

Peter Schwarz**1 June 2020**

The number of right-wing extremist and anti-Semitic acts of violence in Germany rose sharply in 2019. This is revealed in the statistics and figures on political crime presented May 27 by federal Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (Christian Social Union, CSU).

The number of anti-Semitic crimes rose by 13 percent over the previous year to 2,032 cases. The number of attacks on people of the Jewish faith reached its highest level since statistics began being compiled twenty years ago. On average, five to six anti-Semitic crimes were committed each day last year. According to the police, 93 percent of these crimes came from the right. The terrorist attack on the synagogue in Halle was only the tip of the iceberg.

In total, the police registered 41,177 politically motivated crimes last year, an increase of 14 percent. 22,342 of these were assigned to the right-wing camp, 9,849 to the left-wing camp. However, these figures have only limited significance, as they are so-called initial statistics. Incidents are recorded when an initial suspicion is raised, regardless of whether criminal proceedings are held or a court sentence subsequently passed.

In addition, the crimes involved are highly diverse—from mere propaganda offences (40 percent of all cases) to resistance to the police at demonstrations, to cold-blooded murder.

The definition of what is “right” and “left” is also left to the police, whose ranks include many sympathizers of the far right. When neo-Nazis march, the police often take brutal action against left-wing counter-demonstrators, with the result that it is these, and not the neo-Nazis, who appear in the violence statistics.

All in all, however, the figures leave no doubt that right-wing extremism and anti-Semitism are on the rise in Germany. Even Interior Minister Seehofer, who

otherwise notoriously trivializes right-wing extremism, could no longer deny this.

“The greatest threat in our country comes from the right,” he said at the presentation of the report and spoke of a “long blood trail” of right-wing extremism, ranging from the actions of the terrorist neo-Nazi National Socialist Union (NSU) to the attacks in Munich, Halle and Hanau, to the murder of Kassel’s District President Walter Lübcke by a right-wing extremist.

Georg Meier (Social Democratic Party, SPD), chairman of the Conference of Interior Ministers, said that structures had emerged in the right-wing extremist sector that had not been seen or fought against for too long. The Thuringian state interior minister reported on right-wing concerts in his state with thousands of participants who had given the Hitler salute (Sieg Heil).

Given the hostility to the right-wing extremists felt by the vast majority of the population, Seehofer and Meier are trying to cover their tracks. The neo-Nazis and anti-Semites feel strong above all because they have the state apparatus and the parties of the ruling class behind them. Even the hypocritical assertions by officials that they now want to take action against the right-wing threat do not change this.

In his book *Why Are They Back?*, the deputy chairman of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) Christoph Vandreier has shown in detail how the conditions for the rise of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) and its fascist periphery were created at the universities, in the media, in politics and in the state apparatus.

Global capitalism has “solved none of the problems that led to catastrophe in the 1930s,” the book’s foreword says. “All of the social, economic, and political contradictions are erupting once again with

full force.” The German bourgeoisie is thus confronted again with the same problems it tried to solve through war and fascism and is now returning to the same methods.

This began with the trivialisation of the crimes of German imperialism and the Nazi regime by professors such as Herfried Münkler and Jörg Baberowski, and their vehement defence by the media and official politics against student criticism. It continued with the hype surrounding the racist inflammatory writings of leading SPD figure Thilo Sarrazin and the anti-refugee Pegida protests, which were played down as a demonstration by “concerned citizens” who had to be “taken seriously.”

The campaign against refugees, which was more or less openly supported by all the establishment parties and media, was accompanied by the assertion that the danger of anti-Semitism did not come from the right, but from refugees of the Muslim faith and the left.

While the Israeli prime minister feted notorious right-wing extremists such as Matteo Salvini, Viktor Orbán and Rodrigo Duterte at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, left-wing intellectuals, artists and activists were denounced as anti-Semites. Only recently, the Cameroonian historian and philosopher Achille Mbembe has become the subject of such a campaign. But the statistics fully confirm that anti-Semitism comes from the fascist right.

The AfD has also been courted by politicians and the media and has been entrusted with the chairmanship of important committees in the Bundestag (parliament). Hans-Georg Maassen, when head of the secret service, advised the ultra-right party and openly sympathises with its positions. Only recently, the Thuringia state Premier Bodo Ramelow (Left Party) personally helped the AfD obtain a vice-president post in state parliament with his vote.

Above all, the state apparatus has played a major role in building up right-wing extremist structures. The fascist network, from which the NSU terrorists and the murderer of Kassel district president Walter Lübcke emerged, is riddled with dozens of Confidential Informants from the secret service and the Criminal Investigation Departments, who financed and built it up. Not one of them has been brought to justice, and the relevant files remain under lock and key to this day.

Numerous articles and television documentaries have

also been produced about the so-called “Hannibal” network, consisting of elite KSK soldiers, special police officers, judges, lawyers and secret service officials, which keeps death lists, hoards weapons and conducts military exercises, without any of those with political responsibility having reacted. Almost all of the network’s protagonists are at large.

Two weeks ago, when another large weapons cache and Nazi memorabilia were found belonging to a KSK soldier, KSK Commander Markus Kreitmayr wrote a letter to his soldiers, wondering why, “in the midst of our community, there are obviously still individuals” who “belong to the so-called right-wing spectrum.” Extremists would be removed, he threatened and then asked them to please leave the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) of their own accord.

Kreitmayr knows better. The soldier, who was arrested in early May, had served in the KSK for 20 years and had also been there when a company commander celebrated his departure two years ago with a right-wing rock concert, Hitler salute, and prostitutes.

The existence of right-wing extremist networks in the Bundeswehr has not been a secret since at least February 2017, since the unmasking of Franco A., who had acquired a false identity as a refugee. But the defence ministry, the Bundeswehr leadership and the Military Counter-Intelligence Service systematically shielded them and will continue to do so.

The rise in right-wing extremist and anti-Semitic crimes is a warning. In the face of the deepest international economic crisis since the 1930s, the ruling class is once again preparing for dictatorship and war.



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