

Germany: The “riots” in Frankfurt and the right-wing network in the police

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After the so-called “Stuttgart Night of Violence” in late June, a similar event in Frankfurt is now being used to systematically increase police powers and justify and strengthen radical right-wing structures in the state apparatus.

In the early hours of Sunday morning, after an open-air party on Frankfurt’s Opernplatz [Opera Square] attended by about 3,000, clashes between young people and the police broke out. According to the police, officers who intervened in a brawl had bottles thrown at them. The glass panel of a tram stop was also broken. There are no independent reports about the events.

The police arrested 39 youths aged 17 to 23, but had to release them all the next day, as the public prosecutor’s office saw no evidence that they had been in an encounter with police officers. Nevertheless, the media and politicians immediately set in motion their propaganda machinery.

The Hesse state Interior Minister Peter Beuth (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) declared, “This senseless violence against the police cannot be justified by anything.” Referring to “security circles,” the *Bild* tabloid reported that the people involved were similar to those “from the riots in Stuttgart”—“a high percentage of immigrants, drunk and highly aggressive.” Stefan Müller, managing director of the Christian Social Union (CSU) faction in the *Bundestag* (federal parliament), called for “the causes to be clearly named—failed integration and the denial of grievances by left-wing elites.”

The Frankfurt police chief, Gerhard Bereswill, also claimed that the youths were mainly men with an immigration background. Asked by the *Hessenschau* newspaper about the causes of the clashes, he said that in addition to alcohol and an aggressive attitude, he named “the sweeping accusations” to which the police were exposed. Police officers were suspected of being right-wing extremists and were confronted with this on the

streets. In addition, he said, there were accusations of racism and racial profiling, as well as accusations of police violence, which had spilled over to Germany after the death of George Floyd. The German police were being falsely identified with the American police.

The police chief deliberately mixes up cause and effect. Young people have every reason to be suspicious of the police.

For weeks now, more and more details about right-wing extremist networks in the Hesse police force have become known. Numerous celebrities—including the lawyer Seda Basay-Yildiz, who acted for several of the victims of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Underground (NSU), leading Left Party politicians, the cabaret artist Idil Baydar, Green Party member Jutta Dittfurth and the journalist Deniz Yücel—have received death threats signed “NSU 2.0.” In several cases, the threats contained personal data, which had been retrieved shortly before from a Hesse police computer.

But the perpetrators are being covered up by the highest authorities in state and politics. Although it would be easy to identify the officers whose accounts were used to retrieve the data, the police allegedly still do not know who is behind it.

At the centre of the affair is the 1st police station in Frankfurt, which is also responsible for Opernplatz, the site of the recent clashes. Two years ago, data about Basay-Yildiz was retrieved there. On the mobile phone of the policewoman who had logged in, there was a chat group in which police officers glorified Hitler and the Holocaust. Five of the officers involved were from the 1st Frankfurt police station. They were suspended, but nothing else has happened to them.

When data about the leader of the Left Party parliamentary group, Janine Wissler, were later retrieved from a police computer in Wiesbaden, the police officer responsible was not even searched.

Cabaret artist Idil Baydar filed criminal charges eight times because she received threatening emails. But the investigations were unsuccessful each time. Baydar learned from the press, not from police sources, that her data had been retrieved from a police computer.

Nevertheless, the Frankfurt police president is now blaming “the blanket accusation,” i.e., the exposure of right-wing extremist networks in the police force, for stone-throwing at police officers. This is a transparent attempt to suppress any criticism of the police.

To this end, the Frankfurt “riots” are being exaggerated excessively. Even if one takes the highly embellished portrayal of the police as a yardstick, it pales in comparison to the violence that football hooligans, for example, regularly use. According to official police statistics, 1,127 people were injured in violent clashes in the 2018-19 football season. Criminal proceedings were initiated against 6,289, a quarter of them for assault. For 34 match days, this means an average of 33 injured and 185 criminal proceedings per week. But since the hooligans are mostly right-wing extremists, their violence is hardly worth a line in the media.

The accusation of racial profiling is also not made up of thin air. The police openly admit to it themselves. For example, the Stuttgart police conducted so-called “family tree research” after the “night of violence” there, according to their own statements, whereby they inquired at registration offices about the origin of the parents of youths with German passports. Both Greens and CDU politicians defended this practice, which is reminiscent of Nazi anti-Jewish legislation.

A year and a half ago, the police introduced the category “anti-German” nationwide to classify politically motivated crimes. The right-wing propaganda term comes directly from the ideological arsenal of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). Official bodies dealing with police matters unanimously voted in favour, as *taz* recently reported.

The police’s notorious sympathy for neo-Nazis is also illustrated by an incident that took place in Berlin on the same day as the Frankfurt clashes.

The right-wing extremist cookbook author Attila Hildmann once again organised a motorcade and a rally in the historic centre of Berlin. In front of some 150 applauding participants, he incited against Jews, whom he accused of “wanting to wipe out the German race.” He praised Adolf Hitler as “a blessing” for Germany and threatened Green politician Volker Beck with public execution. Although Hildmann demonstrably committed a

large number of crimes, the police stood by and did not intervene.

Hildmann had already made similar statements on social media. Various Jewish associations reacted with horror, and the Potsdam police headquarters received a total of 1,600 complaints. Nevertheless, the Brandenburg public prosecutor’s office denied that any crime had been committed.

Together with the right-wing terrorist networks in the *Bundeswehr* (armed forces) and the KSK elite forces unit, as well as the close links between the *Verfassungsschutz* (secret service) and militant neo-Nazis, the picture that emerges is of a right-wing conspiracy within the state apparatus, which is covered up and promoted by the grand coalition of the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats together with all the other parties in the Bundestag. Even the Left Party and the Greens, whose members sometimes face death threats, do not lift a finger against this right-wing conspiracy.

There are deep objective reasons for this. Faced with the deepest crisis of capitalism since the 1930s, the German ruling class is returning to the methods of dictatorship and war to secure its rule and suppress all political and social opposition. It is thus reacting to sharp social tensions that herald fierce class struggles.

This is an international development. In all capitalist countries, the ruling class is arming the police and secret services and promoting extreme right-wing movements.

In the US, President Donald Trump has for the first time sent federal security forces into Portland, Oregon, against the will of the local authorities, to suppress demonstrations. In scenes reminiscent of a military dictatorship, these security forces in battle dress act against peaceful demonstrators and drag them into unmarked vehicles.

The struggle against the development of a police state and right-wing extremism requires the building of an independent movement of the international working class that combines the defence of democratic and social rights with the struggle for socialism.



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