

# Racist campaign for a police state after Berlin New Year's Eve

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The new year has begun in Germany with a vicious racist campaign for a police state. The events of the Berlin New Year's Eve are serving as a pretext, with the political and media establishment claiming that unprecedented violence was directed against the security forces.

For days, hardly any other topic has been focused on by the media, which has sought to outdo itself with agitation and the depiction of violence. “The past New Year's Eve will probably go down in the history of Berlin as one of the most brutal and chaotic,” writes the *Berliner Zeitung*. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* speaks of “rioting without limits,” and the right-wing Springer press publishes one article after another about the “New Year's Eve shame.”

The same media outlets and leading politicians are spreading racist hate speech and calling for a strong state. “These riots are also a migration problem,” the *Bild* newspaper comments, calling for “the German rule of law to finally be defended honestly.”

Federal Interior Minister Nancy Faeser (Social Democrats) told the Funke Media Group's newspapers on Wednesday: “We have a big problem in major German cities with certain young men with a migrant background who despise our state, commit acts of violence and are barely reached with education and integration programs.” The state must now “decisively lay down the law for people who are ready to commit violence and refuse to integrate in our cities: with a firm hand and clear language.”

The Christian Democrat member of the Bundestag (federal parliament) Christoph de Vries, who was quoted by numerous media outlets, tweeted in the style of the right-wing extremist Alternative for Germany (AfD): “If we really want to fight riots in our big cities, contempt for the state and attacks against #police and #firefighters, we also have to talk about the role of people, phenotype:

West Asians with darker skin. That's the right way to say it.”

Andrea Lindholz of the Christian Social Union, the former chairman of the Interior Affairs Committee in the Bundestag, claimed that the “excesses of violence” were “the result of years of left-Green laissez-faire politics in the capital.” The Social Democrat/Green/Left Party Berlin state government, the so-called red-green-red Senate, distributes “to the police instructions on politically correct use of language, instead of effectively protecting the emergency services with optimal equipment and political backing.”

This is preposterous on its face. In fact, in recent years, the state government has massively strengthened the Berlin police force, which is teeming with extreme right-wing forces. Even now, they are putting themselves at the forefront of the campaign and are deliberately turning the Berlin election campaign that has just begun into a right-wing offensive for “Law and Order.”

Via Twitter, Berlin Mayor Franziska Giffey (SPD) announced a “summit against youth violence” in response to the New Year's Eve events and demonstratively gave her backing to the security forces. “In the acts of New Year's Eve,” she said, “there is an incredible disrespect for the state and its representatives.” Her “full solidarity” is “with the police and fire brigade.”

She also threatened: “The acts have happened mainly in social hotspots, criminal structures are analyzed closely. I expect fast and consistent criminal investigations and punishments by police, prosecutors and courts. The punishment must immediately follow the deeds.”

The top Green candidate and current transport senator, Bettina Jarasch, immediately backed Giffey's push: “We must now consistently oppose the brutality and violence against representatives of the state.” A summit, as suggested by Giffey, could help “if it builds on existing structures and strengthens them.”

The cultural senator and top candidate of the Left Party, Klaus Lederer, also spoke out in favour of Giffey's police state summit. "We should ask ourselves very intensively what we have failed to do to give these young Berliners a good feeling of home, of equal participation in our society, of belonging," he explained.

Lederer's cynicism is hard to beat. As a long-standing ruling party, the Left Party in Berlin—together with the pro-war, pro-austerity SPD and the Greens—have made it the capital of poverty, exploding rents and crumbling hospitals and schools. According to the latest poverty report of the Paritätische Gesamtverband, Berlin has one of the highest poverty rates among the German federal states. At 19.6 percent, almost one in five Berliners lives in poverty.

The situation is particularly disastrous in migrant neighborhoods such as Neukölln, where the proportion of people at risk of poverty is over 27 percent. If some young people threw firecrackers at police cars on New Year's Eve and hindered the fire brigade in extinguishing work, this is a desperate expression of anger at the disastrous social situation they face and lack of prospects into which the ruling parties have plunged them.

Contrary to the deafening propaganda from the political and media establishment, this year's events do not represent a completely new quality of violence but resemble those of the previous New Year's Eve. In terms of arrests, at 145, the number was even far below that of 2020/21, when there were 700 arrests. According to a report by the *Berliner Zeitung* two years ago, emergency services were "pelted with paving stones and fireworks," "civilian investigators were shot at with a scare gun," and police officers were even attacked with "several Molotov cocktails." Nevertheless, the police spoke at that time of a "quiet" New Year's Eve.

It is now clear that this year's events are being massively exaggerated and that right-wing extremist forces are also playing a role. For example, even *Der Spiegel*, which like the other "leading media outlets" participates in the racist smear campaign, had to admit that videos about the Berlin New Year's Eve turned out to be "fake." A video shared by a representative of the fascist NPD as alleged evidence of excesses of violence was actually created "as early as 2019 in the Chinese Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong."

The number of arrests has also been revised downwards by the police in recent days. Instead of the originally claimed 159 arrested, there were in fact only 145, admitted a spokesman for the police. A total of 18

different nationalities were recorded—45 of the suspects had German citizenship, 27 had Afghan citizenship and 21 had Syrian citizenship. There is much to suggest that most of them have been detained because of their ethnic or national origins. In the meantime, all of them have been set free.

The filthy campaign is reminiscent of previous "New Year's Eve campaigns." In 2015/16, the media and police spread false reports about migrants and refugees who had sexually harassed and raped German women in large cities such as Cologne and Hamburg. In 2020, fake news about left-wing violence and even murders in Leipzig was spread. In both cases, the goal was to strengthen right-wing extremist forces and the police state.

This is exactly what the latest campaign is all about. The ruling class knows that its policies of militarism, social devastation and repression are hated and that workers and youth are radicalizing to the left. "Especially among the young, under 30-year-olds...very different emotions arise: frustration, resignation, anger. And a newly discovered love for socialist ideas," warns *Der Spiegel* in its current issue entitled: "Was Marx right?"

While the news magazine pleads for the "further development" of capitalism, a social storm is brewing beneath the surface. The ruling parties—especially in the German capital—are preparing for this by strengthening the state's apparatus of repression and increasingly embracing authoritarian methods of rule. First, the red-red-green Senate tried by all means to prevent a repetition of the formally and politically completely illegitimate election to the Berlin House of Representatives. Now that the elections are taking place, the main slogan is "Law and Order."

Workers and young people—regardless of their national origin—must not be intimidated by this. To counter the right-wing offensive, they need their own party. The Socialist Equality Party is running for the Berlin election in order to give the enormous social opposition in the population a voice and a socialist perspective. The policies of war and social devastation cannot be stopped and the danger of fascism and dictatorship averted without breaking the power of the banks and corporations and putting them under democratic control.



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