

Germany launches police-state crackdown on climate protesters

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Germany witnessed scenes on Wednesday that are typically seen only in military dictatorships and fascist regimes. Heavily armed police units took action nationwide against the climate change protest group “Last Generation,” storming the homes of leading members. In addition, the group’s website was blocked and the members’ accounts were frozen.

These actions must be taken as a warning by working people in every country. As the capitalist ruling classes escalate their war plans, they work systematically to abrogate fundamental democratic rights and create the basis for police-state rule.

According to the authorities, raids were carried out on a total of 15 buildings located in seven federal states. The actions recalled the darkest period in German history. Carla Hinrichs, a spokeswoman and co-founder of the Climate Alliance, described the storming of her apartment in a tweet:

It was like a scene from a movie. Suddenly you wake up because your door is thundering. You wake up because “police” are screaming and suddenly a policeman with a bulletproof vest stands in front of your bed and points a gun at you. Then they search everything and take everything that actually belongs to your everyday life. That’s scary.

The *World Socialist Web Site* and the Socialist Equality Party of Germany strongly condemn the police terror against the climate change activists. It is directed not only against the Last Generation but aimed at the suppression of any social and political opposition. Peaceful protest, civil disobedience, strikes and ultimately any form of opposition are to be intimidated and criminalized.

The raids on Wednesday took place on the basis of Paragraph 129 of Germany’s Criminal Code, which prohibits the “formation of criminal associations.”

This has extremely far-reaching consequences. The Last Generation activists protest peacefully and explicitly reject violence. They draw attention to their concerns, often by means of traffic blockades.

Paragraph 129 goes back to the Reich Criminal Code of the

German Empire, dating from 1871. It was for the most part applied historically against leftists and communists, sanctioning massive penalties for members of a “criminal association.”

“A person who establishes an association or participates in an association as a member whose purpose or activity is aimed at the commission of criminal offenses shall be punished by imprisonment for up to five years or by a fine,” it states. “Whoever supports such an association or recruits members or supporters for it” is also subject to be punished with “imprisonment for up to three years or a fine.”

Prison sentences have already been imposed on climate change activists in recent weeks. On March 6, two members of the Last Generation were sentenced by the Heilbronn District Court to imprisonment for two to three months without parole for participating in a road blockade. At the end of April, a climate change activist was sentenced by the District Court of Berlin to four months in prison without parole. This repression is now being massively expanded.

Although a court decision has not yet been handed down, the Munich Prosecutor General’s Office, which initiated the raids, declared the Last Generation to be a “criminal association.” Anyone who visited the website of the climate change protest group on Wednesday received the following message:

The homepage of the “Last Generation” was confiscated by the Bavarian State Criminal Police Office on behalf of the General Prosecutor’s Office of Munich—Bavarian Central Office for Combating Extremism and Terrorism (ZET). The Last Generation represents a criminal association according to § 129 StGB (Criminal Code). Attention: Donations to the Last Generation are therefore punishable support of a criminal association!

This militarist posture is not simply the policy of the right-wing Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) government but is supported by all state governments as well as the federal government.

Federal Minister of the Interior Nancy Faeser (Social

Democratic Party) told the newspapers of the Essen-based Funke media group that the measures taken against Last Generation showed the “rule of law” was not to be trifled with.

“The police and the judiciary do not tolerate crimes, but act—as it is their duty to do,” she said. Legitimate protest, she continued, ends where crimes are committed and others’ rights are violated, adding, “If this red line is crossed, then the police must act.”

The new Berlin justice Senator Felor Badenberg, who likewise classified Last Generation as a criminal association, even linked the climate change activists to terrorism. “Whether the Last Generation has to go underground or something else is a decision that the Last Generation has to make for itself,” she said in an interview with public broadcaster ARD’s “Tagesthemen” program.

Badenberg’s appearance underscores the far-right agenda the ruling class is pursuing and the reactionary goals it serves. Badenberg was most recently vice president of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutz), Germany’s domestic intelligence agency.

Between 2013 and 2018, she worked closely with Hans-Georg Maassen, the far-right president of the Verfassungsschutz, and was, according to Wikipedia, “responsible for the office’s contacts with the German Bundestag (parliament) and the federal government, as well as for the president’s speeches and lectures.”

Maassen not only strengthened and defended right-wing and fascist forces during his tenure, he also placed the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party—SGP), the German section of the International Committee of the Fourth International, under intelligence surveillance. He justified this solely on the grounds that the SGP advocates a socialist program, criticizes capitalism, militarism and nationalism and rejects the established parties and trade unions. The *World Socialist Web Site* warned at that time:

The secret service’s attack on the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei is a fundamental assault on democratic rights. It is a component of government policy that is increasingly based on authoritarian forms of rule and the reliance on far-right forces so as to enforce militarist policies, the strengthening of the repressive state apparatus, and attacks on social spending, and to suppress all opposition that emerges. It is reminiscent of the Weimar Republic, when the intelligence agencies, judiciary and police ruthlessly persecuted socialists and pacifists while strengthening the Nazis.

The action against the climate change activists is the implementation of this far-right agenda. Significantly, it was most loudly celebrated by the fascists.

“The nationwide raid” is “a first good step in the right direction,” cheered the deputy spokesman of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), Stefan Brandner. “The rule of law must finally show itself defensively due to the criminal machinations of the terrorists,” he continued. He added that a ban on the association was “the right step in the end.” He noted that his party had “already requested such action a few weeks ago in the German Bundestag” and hoped that “the federal government now quickly acts accordingly.”

The larger political and historical context of the drive to dictatorship is obvious. As in the 1930s, massive military rearmament and preparations for world war require an authoritarian and, ultimately, fascist regime. In France, the Macron government has responded to nationwide protests against pension cuts designed to shift the cost of military spending onto the working class with mass arrests and rampant police violence.

This dangerous development underlines the importance of the SGP’s constitutional complaint against Faeser’s Ministry of the Interior and its secret service. The complaint states:

In the face of the proxy war that the German government is waging against Russia, the most extensive rearmament since Hitler, and ferocious attacks on workers through galloping inflation, wage theft and mass layoffs, the aim is to silence anyone who speaks out against this aggressive class policy or even calls it by its name.

If the Supreme Court follows the government and the ruling in the lower court, it will be a step towards dictatorship. Every strike by workers, every protest against rearmament and every demonstration against the far right could be banned as anti-constitutional.

The massive crackdown on climate change activists is a serious warning. It shows how quickly and aggressively the ruling class implements its agenda under conditions of war and the intensification of the international class struggle. The SGP will step up its fight to build an independent mass movement against capitalism, war and dictatorship. We call on workers and youth to defend the climate change activists against state repression.

Support our constitutional complaint by signing this petition on [Change.org](https://change.org).



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