

What are the lessons from the brutal attack on SPD politician Matthias Ecke?

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The brutal attack on Social Democrat Member of the European Parliament Matthias Ecke in Dresden shows just how far right-wing extremist terror has progressed in Germany.

The 41-year-old Social Democratic Party (SPD) politician, who is once again running for the European Parliament, was attacked and beaten to the point of hospitalisation by four young men late on Friday evening as he was putting up election posters in the Striesen district of Dresden, Saxony. He sustained serious head injuries and had to undergo surgery. Shortly before, the same group is suspected of attacking and injuring a 28-year-old Green Party campaign worker.

All indications are that the attackers were right-wing extremists. A witness confirmed this. The police kept a low profile. Although a 17-year-old youth accompanied by his mother contacted them the following night and confessed to the offence, they did not comment on the motive for the attack. They released the teenager, saying there was no danger of him going into hiding. He had apparently refused to give the names of his accomplices. According to press reports, the police are still searching for persons unknown.

The attack on Ecke was preceded by a significant increase in right-wing extremist violence. In Saxony alone, there were 248 right-wing motivated attacks last year, 21 percent more than in 2022. At least 380 victims were affected. The fact that politicians from Chancellor Scholz's party, the SPD, are now also being brutally attacked shows that the right-wing extremist thugs will stop at nothing.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) condemns the attack on Ecke. In a video recorded on the fringes of a demonstration at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, Gregor Kahl, who is

standing for the SGP in the European elections, says: "The SGP condemns the violent right-wing extremist attack on Ecke and members of the Green Party in the strongest possible terms. The fact that the fascists can act so aggressively shows how far the fascist danger has progressed in Germany."

The attack on the SPD politician raises the question: How could it come to this?

The political responsibility for the arrogant behaviour of the far right lies with the governing parties—the SPD, Greens and Liberal Democrats (FDP), who form the federal government in Germany, and the Christian Democrats (CDU), Greens and SPD who form the state government in Saxony. They have covered up and strengthened the extreme right, adopted its policies to a large extent and normalised social barbarism.

The federal government is investing huge sums in armaments to make Germany "fit for war" again; and is working in Ukraine with an ultra-right regime that bans socialist parties and worships Nazi collaborators, and insists on defeating Russia militarily, even if it means risking a nuclear war. The German government takes brutal action against anyone who protests against the genocide of the Palestinians in Gaza. In terms of refugee policy, it has completely adopted the policy of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). And in terms of social policy, it is working with the trade unions to reduce real wages and social benefits, while the wealth of the rich is exploding.

In this climate of social and political reaction, the political heirs of Hitler now thrive. They can also present themselves as the only opposition because the Left Party—which holds the state prime ministership in neighbouring Thuringia—supports government policy on all key issues. And, like the Left Party split-off Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW), competes with the AfD

for the most reactionary anti-refugee policy.

Saxony has long been notorious as a hotbed of right-wing violence under the regime of the CDU, which the SPD has served as a coalition partner for 10 years. A trail of right-wing extremist scandals runs through the police and judiciary. The fascist National Socialist Underground (NSU) trio of murderers were able to operate out of here undisturbed for years. When a right-wing extremist mob raged in Chemnitz in 2018, it was not only defended by the head of the domestic secret service, Hans-Georg Maassen, who lost his office as a result, but also by Minister President Michael Kretschmer (CDU), who is still in office.

Now, leading representatives of the SPD and the Greens express outrage at the attack on Ecke and are calling for the police to be strengthened. Federal Interior Minister Nancy Faeser has called a special conference of state interior ministers for Tuesday to discuss “tough action.” SPD party leader Lars Klingbeil is urging an “unequivocal response from the constitutional state.”

However, the establishment of a police state does not weaken the right-wing extremists, it strengthens them. The police are themselves permeated by right-wing extremist networks. Police officers in Saxony receive their baptism of fire when they beat up left-wing demonstrators in Leipzig. In some cases, they also work directly with right-wing extremists.

Solidarity demonstrations for Matthias Ecke took place in Dresden and Berlin on Sunday. According to the organisers, around 3,000 people attended in Dresden and 1,000 in Berlin. They were mainly SPD and Green Party officials and members and people close to them.

Speakers in Dresden included SPD Chairwoman Saskia Esken, Saxony’s Economics Minister Martin Dulig (SPD) and Bundestag (federal parliament) Vice-President Katrin Göring-Eckardt (Greens). CDU representatives, such as former Saxony and Federal Interior Minister Thomas de Maizière, also attended the rally.

Speakers in Berlin included SPD Chairman Lars Klingbeil, SPD General Secretary Kevin Kühnert, Green Party Co-chairs Ricarda Lang and Omid Nouripour, Green Party politician and Fridays for Future activist Luisa Neubauer, as well as the Minister Presidents of Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia,

Michael Kretschmer and Hendrik Wüst (both CDU).

The speakers spouted hollow phrases about the “unity of all democrats” and blamed the AfD for the growing violence but uttered not a syllable about their own reactionary role. With their right-wing and dictatorial policies, they have created the basis for the far right and deliberately built up the AfD and the fascist networks in order to suppress any opposition to their pro-war policy and devastating social cuts. This will not change even after the attack on Ecke.

Only the building of an independent movement of the international working class that combines the fight against fascism with the fight against war, social inequality and for a socialist programme can stop the right-wing danger. This goal is at the centre of the European election campaign of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei.



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