

Germany: Right extremist terror in Hanau

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Nine lives were lost in the most recent extreme right-wing terrorist attack in Germany. In the night of February 19-20, 9 customers at the Shisha-Bar "Midnight" and the restaurant "Kesselstadt" in Hanau were victims of a brutal murder, other people were injured, some of them seriously. The racist targeted mainly migrants. After the attacks, the right-wing assassin fled home and took the life of his mother and himself.

This act of barbarism brutally tore 10 innocent people from their lives, leaving numerous relatives and friends grieving and in pain, people to whom we can only express our sympathy and compassion in this way. We call on all comrades to take part in the vigils for the victims, in order to pay tribute to the families, friends and acquaintances of the dead and injured, knowing full well that this can do little to alleviate their grief, their anger and their wrath.

Legal Terrorism

But we can make an effort to understand this barbaric act and its causes, so that anger and sadness, fury and fear can be turned into resistance against racist terrorism and right-wing extremism.

The motives of the probable shooter, who also shot himself and his mother while fleeing from the police, should be clear to anyone. He is a right-wing extremist. In a letter of confession, the suspected perpetrator, Tobias R. speaks of "the need to destroy certain peoples whose expulsion from Germany is no longer possible". In a video, he combines his ethnic racism with conspiracy theories. Thus, the USA is under the "influence of secret societies". Above all, his hatred was directed against migrants from Turkey and Arab countries, as the choice of the sites of the assassination attempts underlines. The murder of as many migrants as possible was the goal of his barbaric act.

Whether Tobias R. was part of an organised Nazi cell or acted "independently", how he was connected with like-minded people beyond the Internet community and right-wing forums, cannot be answered at this time. From his publications, however, it is unambiguously evident that he was a political-ideological right-wing activist who called for terrorist action, for a white, national "uprising" and now took action.

He joins a whole series of horrifying racist murders and attacks of the last 30 years, including the antisemitic attacks in Halle and the murder of the Hessian CDU politician Walter Lübcke in 2019. According to investigations by the Amadeu Antonio Foundation, since 1990 over 200 people have been victims of right-wing, racist and fascist violence. People who come from Turkey and Arab countries, or who are perceived as Muslims, are particularly targeted by these attacks, which range from racist thugs to organised terrorist cells such as the NSU. In the meantime, a whole range of such groups are operating underground. A 12-member Nazi cell, which according to its own statements wanted to drive the country into civil war with targeted attacks, was discovered just a few days ago.

Investigating authorities, the public prosecutor's office and bourgeois politicians like to speak of individual perpetrators in such attacks despite their alarming increase. But this is exactly what terrorists like Tobias

R. are not, even if they act on their own account.

The increase in right-wing attacks, such as the formation of terrorist groups, cells, and networks, is rather the sharpest expression of an international and German shift to the right. This includes the rise of right-wing populist parties such as the AfD, fascist organisations such as the "Identitarian Movement" and clandestine terrorist units. Tobias R. immediately reminds everyone of the assassin of Christchurch or the Norwegian mass murderer, Anders Breivik.

Racist delusion

All of them have an irrational, nationalist delusion at the heart of their ideology, a mixture of conspiracy theory, racism, antisemitism and all kinds of reactionary ideas such as anti-feminism. As bizarre and unrealistic as these outpourings may seem (and are), and even though they turn reality upside down, they tie in with the imaginations of a much broader right-wing spectrum that reaches deep into the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois reactionary strata (and, of course, can also find a hearing among politically backward workers).

That "we" would lose our "German" identity, that Islam does not belong to Germany, is also held by the bourgeois mainstream, along with a number of other racist ideas. That migration must be controlled and that refugees must not be allowed to come to Europe in masses again - even the SPD, trade union leaderships, the Greens and large parts of the Left Party do not contradict this. Even if they distance themselves from the openly racist justifications of the Right and criticise them, their criticism is not only half-hearted, but ultimately agrees with the Right that the number of migrants should not be allowed to rise too high.

For the extreme right and right-wing populism, of course, already controlled migration, integration of skilled workers and specialists, German courses and equal rights are considered a betrayal of the nation. Conjuring up the threat of a "repopulation" and "Islamisation" of Europe and the USA has become part of their standard ideological repertoire. For example, the AfD right-wing outsider Björn Höcke calls for a "deportation culture" and promises a "deportation initiative 2020" in the event of AfD participation in the government of Thuringia.

Here, however, the currently existing difference between the right-wing thugs and fascist and völkisch organised terrorism becomes clear. Höcke and Co. understand the existing bourgeois state as an instrument with which to achieve their political goals. Police, courts etc would only have to be "liberated" from the rubbish of Merkel's cosmopolitanism, from the legacy of the 68ers, including a series of personnel purges.

Right-wing terrorism has long since lost this ultimately positive relationship with the existing state apparatus. Whether as a clandestine small group or acting individually, it wants to send a signal, shake up and contribute to the radicalisation of the nation. This form of right-wing terror is of course different from that of a fascist mass movement, which directly organises masses and openly mobilises against the working class and the oppressed. But, especially in the current situation, it is supposed to prepare the ground for this.

And we should not underestimate this danger. The increasing individual terrorism on the part of the right signals a fundamental change of mood among large parts of the petty bourgeoisie and the middle classes (including demoralised workers). This is also expressed in the origin of many of the assassins. According to information in the media, Tobias R. was an "educated man", published his views in German and English and studied business administration. Many other right-wing terrorists turned out to be quite "respectable" persons, including a rather high proportion from the police and security apparatus.

Whatever their biographical characteristics, the commonality of their social origins makes it clear that the current crisis in the petty bourgeoisie and the middle classes is manifesting itself ideologically not only as a fear of being declassed, but also as growing mistrust and rejection of the traditional bourgeois leadership and the state. For them, what is needed is a right-wing uprising, a pseudo-revolution, the unmasking of "conspiracies, a pogrom against the "foreign races" and "traitors to the people", which is already exemplarily demonstrated in individual terrorist acts, in the murder of as many as possible.

How to fight?

As the murder of the district president Lübcke has shown, right-wing terrorism can also be directed against representatives of the bourgeois state and parliamentarianism. However, it finds the mass of its victims, and in this it resembles the terror of fascist mass movements, among the working class, migrants, the racially oppressed, left activists or the subproletariat, for example, the homeless. Furthermore, the reactionary radicalism of this form of terrorism is also expressed in the fact that its attacks include the calculation of one's own death, staging it as a beacon.

As important as it is therefore to stop right-wing terrorist cells and individual perpetrators in advance, experience shows two things. First, we cannot rely on the bourgeois state and its police, as in the fight against fascism as a whole. Also, the demand for intensified repression and surveillance does not only go nowhere, but ultimately it points in the wrong direction, because it gives a bourgeois, repressive, racist state apparatus more means of power, which are usually used against us.

Secondly, however, self-protection, the establishment of self-defence units, anti-fascist research, important as they are in detail, can only offer limited protection against clandestine terrorist cells or individuals.

The main emphasis of the struggle must therefore be on the fight against the social roots, not only by identifying and naming capitalism as the cause of fascism, increasing reaction, the shift to the right, crisis. The most important thing is that the working class should appear as the social force that can show a progressive way out of the current social crisis. The influx of members to the AfD and the social shift to the right is not an inevitable automatism in a crisis situation.

The fact that right-wing populism has become a mass force and, in its wake, fascist organisations and terrorism are also increasingly making trouble, is also, and above all, due to the fact that the reformist workers' movement is trying to profile itself not as an anti-capitalist force, but as a better system administrator. Just as the SPD and the trade unions at the federal level of the Grand Coalition are building the wall, the Left Party is constantly making new offers to the Thuringian CDU and hopes for an illusory "unity of democrats". In reality, with their policy of class collaboration, they not only frustrate their own base, they also continue to repel those wage earners they have lost in recent years.

Fascism and racism can be defeated. But for this to happen, a change of political course is needed. The slogan is not unity across all class boundaries, but unity of the workers' movement, of the left, of the migrants against right-wing terror, populism and a shift to the right.

Let us take our anger, sadness, wrath and solidarity to the streets in the days to come! Let us create a broad unity of action of the workers' movement, the left, the migrant, anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations!