

# Münkler receives support from the far right in Germany

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Political scientist Herfried Münkler is receiving support from the far right. The weekly paper *Junge Freiheit*, mouthpiece of the New Right, is now backing his campaign against students who criticize his lectures at Humboldt University each week.

In “Under the Scrutiny of Block Wardens,” Karlheinz Weißmann denounces the blog “Münkler-Watch” as part of a “totalitarian movement.” Block wardens were appointed by the National Socialists to spy on and denounce ordinary citizens.

In the same article, *Junge Freiheit* showers praise on Münkler, commending his inclination “to question the barriers that were put up around political science in Germany.”

According to Weißmann, these “barriers” were erected by “the victorious power USA,” which “used its reeducation program to break the key role played by historiography and the classical General Theory of the State in intellectual life.” This theory was replaced by a “science of democracy,” which “resulted in the comprehensive dominance of views that only considered left or, at best, left-liberal positions as legitimate.”

Münkler has long “opposed this general tendency,” writes Weißmann. That his work has gone unchallenged thus far was either accidental or the result of tactical skill. But now, like many of his conservative colleagues, he is being “subjected to the terror of left-wing convictions” and “placed under the scrutiny of the block wardens who are working to transform the country into a ‘GDR (former East Germany) with a human face.’”

Weißmann accuses Münkler’s critics of exerting a terror of opinion: “Like every totalitarian movement, the one embracing Humboldt University is based less on the omnipotence of an apparatus than on the good

conscience of those who watch over its pure doctrine. Added to this is a willingness, not through force or by command but from a deep inner conviction, to deliver to the chopping block those who have aroused suspicion not with their actions but through an opinion—or a suspected opinion.”

That *Junge Freiheit* supports Münkler so strongly reveals much about the political content of the conflict at Humboldt University. The paper, founded in 1986, operates in the border areas between the right wing of the Christian Democrats and openly neo-Nazi circles. It sees itself as the intellectual organ of the far right. While it avoids the crudest neo-Nazi positions, such as the denial of the Holocaust, it attempts to revive ideological currents that paved the way for the Nazis and were partly incorporated into their ideology.

The sociologist Albert Scherr has written that *Junge Freiheit* is searching for a “tactically clever balance” between “elements of demanding and serious journalism on the one hand, and a clear historical-revisionist, populist-nationalist, xenophobic and racist-tinged position on the other.”

Karlheinz Weißmann, who authored the article denouncing “Münkler-Watch,” is a leading representative of this tendency. He is a senior writer at *Junge Freiheit*, and between 2000 and 2014, he founded and managed the Institute for State Policy with which the paper is closely associated.

Weißmann’s 1993 book *Recalling History* is considered to be a programmatic text for the German New Right. Wikipedia refers to him “as a student of Armin Mohler, about whom he authored a comprehensive biography,” and states that he seeks to “revive the body of thought of Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, Arthur Moeller van den Bruck and other representatives of the ‘conservative revolution’ in the

Weimar Republic.”

The Wikipedia article goes on to explain that Weißmann strives “to revise the coming to terms with the Nazi period by demanding a ‘confident nation’ (book title).” He calls into question “Germany’s alignment with the West in order to revive, in the long run, traditional German great power politics.”

Weißmann has apparently discovered political similarities in Münkler, whose most recent book, *Macht in der Mitte* (Power in the Center), argues that Germany must become the dominant power in Europe and play “the difficult role of disciplinarian.” If one needed any more proof that criticism of Münkler’s views is entirely justified and necessary, this has been confirmed by *Junge Freiheit*.

Weißmann expresses solidarity not only for Münkler, but also for his colleague Jörg Baberowski. He writes that the historian Baberowski, like Münkler, has become the victim of activities whose masterminds “are to be found in a small Trotskyist group.” He is obviously referring to the Partei für Soziale Gleichheit and its youth and student organization the IYSSE, which has criticized Baberowski for his affirmation of Ernst Nolte and his downplaying of war crimes committed by the Nazis.

Nolte, who ignited the Historians’ Dispute in 1986 with his whitewashing of National Socialism, and has since mutated into an open defender of Hitler, ranks among the heroes of *Junge Freiheit*. In 2008, they awarded him their Gerhard Löwenthal Prize. On the occasion of his ninety-second birthday in January of this year, they praised him as one of the “most important political and historical thinkers in the German language during the twentieth century.”

In a detailed 2008 article on Nolte’s eighty-fifth birthday, *Junge Freiheit* blamed Nolte’s defeat in the Historians’ Dispute on “insufficient support from the bourgeois camp,” which was tantamount to the political “self-abandonment” of the bourgeoisie.

“From now on the traditional bourgeois interpretation of German national history was obsolete, even suspect,” complained Moritz Schwarz. “Now a new understanding of history was dominant, aimed at liquidating the bourgeois German nation state as a historical error and moral offense.” This was a consequence of the “demise of the free German nation state in 1933 and again in 1945/1949, and its

replacement by the intellectual civil war regimes of National Socialism and of a Federal Republic tied to the West (rather than a national Federal Republic).”

The article ended with the prediction that the hour of the prophet would come one day. “The historical thinker Ernst Nolte and his bold advances in the realm of historical genesis will still be spoken of when the names of his triumphant opponents will have long been forgotten.”

It comes as no surprise, then, that *Junge Freiheit* defends Jörg Baberowski, who explicitly declared his admiration for Ernst Nolte in *Der Spiegel* in February last year.

The praise from the extreme right for Münkler and Baberowski exposes the real issues in the conflicts at Humboldt University: Germany’s return to great power politics, militarism and war, and the rewriting of history in order to justify such a turn.

This is incompatible with criticism. That is why almost the entire bourgeois media has angrily pounced on the authors of Münkler-Watch, “who have done nothing more than exercise their right to free speech and criticize a professor.”



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