

From far right to pseudo left: anti-refugee witch-hunting after the attack in Solingen, Germany

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After last week's murderous knife attack in Solingen, one could be forgiven for thinking there was only one party in Germany: the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). Politicians from across the entire political establishment outdid each other with right-wing demands for more deportations, tighter asylum laws, more powers for the police and the stigmatisation of entire peoples.

On Friday evening, during the 650th anniversary of the founding of the city of Solingen, a man in the crowd suddenly attacked several people with a knife. He killed three visitors and injured eight others, four seriously. The city festival was immediately cancelled.

A 26-year-old Syrian man was arrested as the alleged perpetrator. He had received subsidiary protection in Germany after his deportation to Bulgaria failed. Islamic State (IS) has claimed responsibility for the attack and posted a video on the internet to this effect. However, it is not clear whether the shrouded man seen in the video is the arrested Syrian.

On Saturday and Sunday, numerous people gathered in Solingen to mourn together. Many declared that they did not want to abandon the city to the right-wingers. "The knife attack was an attack on the open society, on the diversity of the city," one woman told the press.

But on Monday, in Solingen, Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) called for more and faster deportations.

A rally of about 30 supporters of Junge Alternative, the youth organisation of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), shielded and protected by two rows of police, was met by at least ten times as many Solingen residents from the initiative "Solingen is colourful, not brown" (a reference to Hitler's Brown Shirts). Thousands of people live in Solingen, a city in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and have been fighting against racism and xenophobia since the 1993 arson attack carried out by right-wing extremists that cost the lives of five members of the Genc family, of Turkish descent.

However, politicians of all Germany's establishment parties reacted by launching violent agitation against foreigners, as if they had been waiting for an excuse.

Christian Democratic Union (CDU) leader Friedrich Merz

held all refugees from Syria and Afghanistan collectively responsible for the assault, even though many of them have fled from IS terrorism. "We will not accept any more refugees from these countries," Merz declared. Refugees would have to be deported back to Syria and Afghanistan, regardless of the mortal dangers they face in these countries, he said. Merz called for much broader powers for the federal police.

The Social Democratic Party (SPD) took the same line. Its leader, Lars Klingbeil, called for better control of the internet and Islamic communities to stop "radical hate preachers." The "security authorities at federal and state level must once again put everything to the test, he said, adding that they would have to be given even more extensive powers.

Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier also supported granting more powers and more personnel to the security authorities. Interior Minister Nancy Faeser (SPD) announced: "We as a state will respond to this terrorist act with all the necessary severity." Faeser told the daily newspaper WAZ: "We are intensively discussing which instruments we need to further sharpen to combat terror and violence, and what powers our security authorities need in these times."

Sahra Wagenknecht, who heads the BSW split-off from the Left Party, on the campaign trail in eastern Germany, is calling for a "turnaround on asylum" and a "stop signal to the world: don't make your way to Germany." She agitated on X/Twitter: "Those who allow uncontrolled migration will face uncontrollable violence."

On Monday, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) visited Solingen and immediately announced more deportations. These would be further accelerated "if necessary, with legal regulations." At the same time, "consistent, practical enforcement action" was needed, he declared.

Six months ago, on the cover of Germany's leading weekly, *Der Spiegel*, Scholz was already demanding: "We must finally deport on a large scale." He met with CDU leader Merz Tuesday to discuss how to proceed.

Alice Weidel, leader of the AfD, said that "migrant violence against Germans" had "become a horrific new normality." As soon as the AfD was in government, she declared, these people

would “not even be allowed into our country.” She called for a “stop to immigration, admission and naturalisation for at least five years.”

The construction of a totalitarian police state, which all politicians are now calling for, will not prevent acts of violence like those in Solingen. In reality, such authoritarian measures are directed against the working class and all those who oppose the government’s pro-war policies and social attacks.

What is completely missing from the debate on Solingen is the question of the cause of terrorist violence, which not only in Germany, but also in France, Britain, Russia and numerous other countries, repeatedly claims many victims, as it did in 2016 on Berlin’s Breitscheidplatz, which claimed the lives of 12 people visiting a Christmas market.

IS and similar organisations did not appear out of nowhere. They are a product of the brutal wars that the imperialist powers have been waging in the Middle East for decades, from the war against Russia in Afghanistan in the 1980s to the genocide against the Palestinians in Gaza. They were, like Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda, often built up by Western intelligence services, and they are manipulated and controlled by them.

The Islamic State emerged in Iraq after the destruction of the country and the overthrow of Saddam Hussein’s regime by US imperialism. In 2011, it helped the imperialist powers to overthrow the government of Muammar al-Gaddafi in Libya. After that, IS was deployed in Syria with the support of the Central Intelligence Agency, where it fought against the government of Bashar al-Assad. Here, it gained independence and established a caliphate in parts of Syria and Iraq, which was then crushed by Washington at the cost of hundreds of thousands more deaths.

But IS continues to exist and has not cut its ties to the secret services of Western powers and their allied governments in the region. For example, a particularly brutal offshoot of ISIS, Islamic State-Khorasan, is organising terrorist attacks against the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. It also claimed responsibility for the attack on Crocus City Hall in Moscow in April this year, which killed 137 people and injured over 180.

In 2017, following a series of bloody attacks in Tehran, Manchester and London, the WSWs described the modus operandi of the collaboration between Western intelligence services and terrorists in the article “Understanding the geopolitics of terrorism,” which was based on known facts about several attackers. It is worth quoting a longer passage from it in light of the current law-and-order campaign:

What has become clear after 16 years of the so-called “war on terrorism”—going all the way back to the hijackers of 9/11—is that these elements move in and out of the Middle East, Europe and the US itself not only without hindrance, but under what amounts to state

protection. ...

If from time to time these elements turn against their sponsors, with innocent civilians paying with their lives, that is part of the price of doing business.

In the aftermath of terrorist actions, governments respond with stepped-up measures of repression and surveillance. Troops are deployed in the streets, democratic rights are suspended, and, as in France, a state of emergency is made the overriding law of the land. All of these measures are useless in terms of preventing future attacks, but serve very well to control the domestic population and suppress social unrest.

Nothing that the media and politicians are currently saying about the attack in Solingen should be taken at face value. The involvement of imperialist intelligence agencies cannot be ruled out. Even if the arrested Syrian man is the culprit, the question remains of who created the conditions in which such a crime could be carried out.

One thing is certain: the arming of the state apparatus and the sealing off of the borders will not stop such murderous actions. The genocide against the Palestinians, the bombing of Lebanon, the threats of war against Iran and other imperialist crimes are producing more recruits for such attacks.

Such attacks can only be prevented if the swamp in which they flourish is dried up. This requires the fight against imperialist war and for democratic rights. The Socialist Equality Party (SGP) vigorously opposes the anti-refugee agitation. We call on all class-conscious workers: Defend with us the rights of refugees and migrants! Their rights are our rights.



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