

# **Confronting Escalating Repression in Germany**

**In the Aftermath of the G20, a Call for Resistance from the Rigaer 94**

CrimethInc.

January 8, 2018

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Following the popular rebellion in Hamburg during the 2017 G20 summit, the German state has sought to crack down violently on dissent. In August, the police shut down the most widely used German-language platform for radical politics. In September, the neo-fascist party Alternative für Deutschland secured seats in the German parliament. On December 5, police carried out 24 raids on leftist and autonomous infrastructure across Germany, seizing laptops, cell phones, and other means of communication. On December 18, the police published photos of people they accuse of participating in the G20 protests. Four days later, an anonymous threatening letter arrived at various autonomous centers around Berlin. Together, these events indicate a rapid descent towards tyranny. Yet German anarchists are resisting every step of the way. The Rigaer 94, a social center in Berlin, is emblematic of their courageous defiance. Here, we present some background on the Rigaer 94 and share translations of two statements on the conflict unfolding in Germany.

## **Background: The Rigaer 94**

The Rigaer 94 is an autonomous housing project and social center in the Berlin neighborhood of Friedrichshain. The house has been at the center of many conflicts with the police, especially over the past two years. In 2016, the police declared the area immediately surrounding the Rigaer Strasse to be a “danger zone.” This designates a zone in which the police do not have to obey the law, where they may act according to the supposed imperatives of “security.” Berlin police regularly carry out illegal searches and set up control checkpoints in the neighborhood to harass inhabitants of the Rigaer Strasse.

In summer 2016, a 500-officer SWAT team raided the Rigaer Strasse and occupied the building’s social center, The Kadterschmiede. Police held the social center for three weeks. In response to this siege, hundreds and hundreds of luxury cars were burnt in night actions all over Germany. A 5000-person demonstration mobilized people from all over Europe to defend the autonomous center. The demonstration clashed with the police, receiving support from the neighborhood and from autonomous centers across Europe.

The fate of the Rigaer was to be decided in a court battle. Yet on the night before the verdict was to be announced, a car belonging to the state’s prosecutor caught fire. As a result, the prosecutor failed to appear in court the next day. The prosecution thus forfeited the case and the Rigaer Strasse won by default. Since then, the police have tried numerous times to provoke the autonomous center into conflicts.

## **Rigaer 94: Call for Resistance / Release of Manhunt Photos of Berlin Police**

*This text appeared in German on December 17, 2017.*

The police state has set its forces loose: on Monday, December 18, the police published photographs of the faces of one hundred people who took part in the resistance to the G20 summit in Hamburg. The state has discarded the pretext of criminal prosecution entirely. Instead, it has made a major provocation against our movement by launching a new campaign of repression. This campaign is intended to strike fear into the hearts of those who participated in the G20 summit in order to crush all resistance. We will not be silent about this attack. The task of dragging

this society of police collaborators, murderers, and fascists onto the funeral pyre remains before us.

It is clear to every reasonable person that the resistance in Hamburg was necessary. The forces of repression and the right-wing media have failed to reframe the narrative of the outpouring of defiance against the G20 summit. In a country that proclaims itself to be among the most democratic in the world, a country that presents itself as invincible, a country equipped with a sophisticated apparatus of violence, and in the face of enormous risks and serious consequences, tens of thousands of people dared to rise up. A mix of protests and offensive actions turned the summit of the ruling class into a disaster. A disaster for the city of Hamburg and a disaster for the powerful 20 leaders themselves, whose most important meeting now faces an uncertain future.

The summit was also a disaster for the police. In the Kaiser's Germany, in fascist Germany, and today in democratic Germany, the police have never limited themselves to a merely executive function. They have always served as the front line for this nation of murderers. We all know how deeply anchored the ideology of the police is in our society. A society that threw Rosa Luxemburg's corpse into the canal; that hunted Anne Frank behind her bookcase, to throw her into the extermination camps alongside millions of other "subhumans"; a society that ends up crowning the German-national military as the resistance<sup>1</sup>—this is a fascist society. The security apparatus of Germany, which was established during those slaughters and is now used to relentlessly hunt rebels and anti-fascists in the name of the German people, is also fascist. Just a few years after its "liberation,"<sup>2</sup> this society and its executives were able to unite in the hunt against communists.

The German security apparatus was refined to perfection when it was used against guerrilla groups like the Red Army Faction, which carried out the long-overdue execution of Hanns Schleyer,<sup>3</sup> a member of the Nazi Party. The faces of rebels were posted on every corner on manhunt posters; at every intersection, heavily-armed police maintained checkpoints. The death penalty was re-introduced and the nature of police work shifted. A new social discourse devised by a coalition of media, politicians, and police paved the way for state assassinations, psychological torture, and new special laws to be used against a large part of the population. The police state, still in its infancy when it murdered Benno Ohnesorg<sup>4</sup>, had to reckon with the permanent threat of insurrection.

Over the years, the German police have developed into a state within the state. Following the end of the urban guerrilla groups and the new social movements of the 1980s and 90s, we are confronted with a society that can no longer generate any relevant opposition to the system. Not even when people are tortured and murdered in the bunkers of police stations, like Oury Jalloh from Dessau, who was burned alive by the fascist pigs. At the moment, the only factor inhibiting the completion of this totalitarian police state is its hesitance to scandalize civil rights activists too

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<sup>1</sup> The German military is so unpopular that it has to portray joining the military as an act of "resistance," as nobody wants to join. The military released a new youtube series which is an example of this.

<sup>2</sup> The end of World War II and subsequent occupation of Germany by Western powers and the Soviet Union is usually referred to as Germany's "liberation," implying that Germany was successfully cleansed of fascism.

<sup>3</sup> Hanns Martin Schleyer served in the SS during World War II. After the war, he became an important industrial leader in West Germany. The fact that prominent Nazi figures could still hold power after WWII confirms that de-Nazification never took place in Germany. This helps to explain why the RAF kidnapped and murdered Schleyer in 1977.

<sup>4</sup> The university student Benno Ohnesorg was murdered by German police during a demonstration in 1967. His death was an important moment in the German student movement; the June 2 movement was named after the date of his death.

much. These civil rights activists, who like us are continually deprived of resources and support from civil society, have made their decision—whatever the state does cannot be wrong, whatever the press says is true: resistance is futile.

The time of comfortable protests is long gone. Today, German society has arrived at an extreme it hasn't reached in over 80 years. Those who resist face the following challenges:

- Mere presence at a demonstration can mean receiving a prison sentence of many years.
- The police can designate zones in which their own laws are valid.
- The police can designate anyone as dangerous in order to lock them up and surveil them completely without approval from a judge.

Already in the lead-up to the G20 summit, sanctions were made against rebels. People who were designated by the police as “dangerous” received notice that they were forbidden to travel to Hamburg. These people were required to sign in every day at the police station while the summit was taking place, and were threatened with fines and jail time if they failed to obey. In a bid to intimidate rebels, police made their surveillance of certain people extremely obvious, not to mention the extensive secret surveillance that surely took place.

During the G20 summit, people undermined police control throughout the entire city of Hamburg, leading to the “adjustment” of citizens’ rights and massive amounts of violence by heavily armed troops of police.

The police activities before and during the summit were not qualitatively new. For many years now, the security apparatus has utilized every major event as an opportunity to mount new attacks on social conventions. What was exceptional this time was the number of attacks and how shamelessly they carried out these attacks against protesters.

What began after the summit was a qualitative leap. Some people invented conspiracy theories, claiming that the riots were carried out by the state in order to draw radical infrastructure into a final repression campaign in which it could be defeated once and for all. This kind of thinking is idiotic. We know precisely that the political disaster we created in Hamburg was desirable for us. In order to end this conspiracy theory, we claim full responsibility for everything that happened in Hamburg: from the first citizens’ protests to the very last stone that flew at the police.

As a part of that radical infrastructure, shortly after the summit we organized a demonstration in solidarity with all of those who were targeted by repression. In the future, we will not shirk our responsibility to take revolt further. Those who can only see state conspiracy behind every act of struggle deprive resistance of all its characteristics; they have no legitimacy to speak in the name of revolt.

It is clear that the state is fighting to ensure that its narrative of the events is the definitive one. It must conquer the narrative as it conquers everything else: our lives and our social structures, the environment and technology. In this battle for capitalist and nationalist ends, the state will always end up demanding fascism. With the same tactics, they try time and time again to delegitimize resistance by branding it criminal, antisocial, and apolitical. For this purpose, the German state can rely on its police, its media, and the German people, as well as its representatives.

It's difficult to say who is the sleaziest of all participants in this process is. The boss of Soko schwarzer block,<sup>5</sup> who would hunt everything he could get his hands on with the same fervor; or the nauseating Scholz,<sup>6</sup> who represents the rotten bourgeoisie of Hamburg and their fancy cars; or the representatives of the press who serve to carry out PR work for the police; or the craven police collaborators, who deliver people up to brutal repression with the pictures they took with their cell phones, who would rather march behind every Hitler figure than take their lives in their own hands.

Some laughed at the latest wave of raids, which we saw coming far in advance. Others laughed because they knew that Fabio,<sup>7</sup> a nice young man from Italy, would be a problem for the state's strategy of repression. However, we should not underestimate the police strategy. An essential part of this strategy is to use PR to achieve long-term sovereignty of interpretation over the events in Hamburg.

All the same, who would have thought that so many months later, thanks to their regular appointments with the press, the G20 would still be a top theme on the daily news? And who would have thought that despite having almost unlimited resources at their disposal, their professional press work would fail without our doing anything?

For these reasons, and on the occasion of the manhunt for participants in the Hamburg riots against the G20, we want to emphasize anew the importance of our struggle against the state—against fascist organizations like the police, the secret services, and the right-wing structures—and also against the collaborators and informants within the population and the press. Fabio and everyone else who remains defiant in front of the judge are role models demonstrating a dignified approach to dealing with repression. The same goes for everyone who sends messages of solidarity to those targeted by repression, despite the intimidation of the state.

On the occasion of the police manhunt and the state's call for a new wave of denunciations against 100 people, we have decided to release photographs of 54 police officers who took part in the eviction of the Rigaer Strasse last year. We would be glad to receive any tips, including where these police officers live and where we can meet them in private. Aside from taking part in the eviction, they should also be held responsible for all the violence they unscrupulously perpetrated during the three-week-long siege of our neighborhood in Freidrichshain.

It is important that we stop hesitating and put our strength into mobilizing solidarity and structures that are capable of action. The demonstrations<sup>8</sup> after the raids were a beginning. After the next raids, we must become even more numerous. It is important that when all else fails, we take the streets to show our solidarity with all the comrades who are hunted by the henchmen of the ruling class.

So—out into the streets! Determined and angry, despite the repression, we will fight against the ruling order!

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<sup>5</sup> Soko Black Block is the official name the German police gave to their campaign of repression against G20 participants.

<sup>6</sup> Scholz is the Mayor of Hamburg, famous for suggesting that the police give people poison to make them vomit in order to prove that they took drugs.

<sup>7</sup> An 18-year-old Italian arrested at the G20 and held in prison for 4 months.

<sup>8</sup> On December 5, police raided several homes belonging to people accused of participating in a black bloc that the police brutally attacked during the G20 summit. Demonstrations took place all over Germany in response to the raids.

## **Response to the Rigaer 94's Call for a Police Manhunt / Threatening Letter Received from the Police State**

*This text appeared in German on December 30, 2017.*

On December 22, an anonymous letter was delivered to various locations that the authorities have designated as “left-extremist meeting points.” The nine-page letter, double-sided with three photos on each side, contains threats against 42 people whose full names are listed. For 18 of those people, their photos were taken from the Berlin police department’s records or from people’s ID cards and are accompanied by partly relevant, mostly slanderous commentaries. This information can be directly traced to the data records from the state security departments. In addition, 24 people were named without their photos.

The letter, reproduced below for the sake of documentation, is signed by a fake organization called “The Center for Political Correctness.” The letter claims to be a reaction to the behavior of the radical autonomous house project Rigaer 94: “Your presence annoys an entire neighborhood.” The letter proves that the people who sent it were directly affected by the publication of the Rigaer 94’s call for a manhunt against the police. In the call, photographs of 54 police officers who took part in the summer 2016 eviction of Rigaer 94 were publicly released.

The letter threatens to publish more information about the individuals it targets. It is highly likely that the information and data records listed in this letter were passed on to Nazis. Many Nazi organizations are named in the letter, including “Autonomous Nationalists” and the “Identitarian Movement.” For the time being, we do not know to what extent this personal data has already been sent to Nazis. The letter makes nebulous threats—for example, against people’s cars or families, or that lawyers or investigation committees will become involved. The letter also threatens to send the data records to the police. This particular threat is an alibi that proves the letter’s authorship. An initial evaluation by a number of those targeted by the letter has confirmed that the information can only have been made available to the “scene-aware” state security officers (LKA 5) that work within the Berlin police department. The data records are pulled from approximately the last ten years. We are certain that the letter was created and sent by the Berlin police, since no one else would have access to these photos or the biometric information and investigation files.

The fake moniker reveals more about the authors. “Center for political correctness” is a play on “Center for Political Beauty.” The Center for Political Beauty is a leftist organization that uses publicity campaigns to fight against racism and fascism. Their last action was directed at the Alternative For Germany (AfD, the far-right German party) politician Björn Höcke. Höcke made a name for himself with his pro-fascist remarks about the Holocaust memorial in downtown Berlin: “We Germans, our people [Volk], are the only people in the world that has planted a monument to shame in the heart of our capital.” In addition, he complained about the “stupid” coping policy (*Bewältigungspolitik*)<sup>9</sup> and demanded that the “memorial policy shift 180 degrees.” In order to stigmatize him and the AfD, the Center for Political Beauty secretly rented the empty lot adjacent to Höcke’s home and set up concrete slabs or “stelae” that looked exactly like those of the Holocaust memorial in Berlin. They also publicly threatened to publish the results of their 10-month-long observation of Höcke from near his house. From this much, we can conclude that

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<sup>9</sup> This concept is specific to Germany and means “the politics of coming to terms with the past.”

the letter that was sent to us was sympathetically received by the ranks of the Berlin police with their fascist activities and sympathies—to say the very least.

The threat to forward the data to extra-parliamentary Nazi organizations such as the Autonomous Nationalists shows that the authors of this letter are actively involved in far-right organizing. Furthermore, sending such a letter demonstrates that the authors have a great deal of confidence in and support from the police department. This is shown not only by the downright fascist ideology that the letter expresses, but also by the means itself. Slander and the sending of anonymous threats are known in all parts the world where political tension is high and regimes entrust their stability to security organizations. These techniques were developed in the 1960s in the US, where the FBI used similar methods to target the Black Panther Party. Named COINTEL-PRO, this program was exported to all dictatorships. The East German secret service, utilizing their strategy of “decomposition,” employed similar measures.

Cooperation between organized Nazi groups and the police is nothing new. During the siege and eviction of the Rigaer 94 in the summer of 2016, the personal information of people recognized by the police at the demonstrations was leaked to a Nazi blog in the “Halle-Leaks.” In addition, fliers illustrated with SS symbols were distributed in the area expressing support for the police. We also recall the right-wing activist Marcel Göbel,<sup>10</sup> whose false testimony about the Rigaer 94 and the Kadterschmiede<sup>11</sup> was enough for the secret service to classify these places as “Autonomous strongholds.”

Lastly, the threatening letter confirms the claim made by the Rigaer 94 in their call for a man-hunt against the police: fascist ideology lives inside the police departments, especially the secret services and state security. This is cause enough for us to renew our struggles.

We are not shocked that the police are carrying out this kind of repression. We are talking about the same police that murdered Oury Jalloh. The same police that made headlines throughout Germany because of its contacts with neo-Nazi groups and its escapades with individual Nazis.<sup>12</sup> The same police force that let one of their officers be killed in order to prevent the full investigation of NSU activities.<sup>13</sup>

To everyone involved in our movements: we must prepare for further acts of disinformation, slander, false reporting, psychological and physical attacks, and “inexplicable” fires like the one that occurred in October 2015 at the entrance of the Liebig 34.<sup>14</sup> The ones responsible for these acts are members of the Berlin Police department. The police figured out a long time ago that anarchy cannot be fought with legal means; they have decided on a strategy of direct escalation in the conflict with the Rigaer 94.

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<sup>10</sup> Marcel Göbel was a right-wing activist who infiltrated leftist movements. During the summer of 2016, when the Rigaer Strasse was being evicted by the police, luxury cars caught fire every night for months on end to protest the eviction. The police only caught one person committing arson—and that person happened to be right-wing activist Marcel Göbel. Göbel tried to light a poor person’s car on fire to make it appear that leftist activists were indiscriminately burning cars. In fact, left activists only burn luxury cars. After Göbel was arrested, it was revealed that he had worked extensively with the police.

<sup>11</sup> A social center and event space associated with the housing project Rigaer 94.

<sup>12</sup> In October 2017, police officers in Rostock came under fire for their involvement in a Nazi plot to murder left-wing activists.

<sup>13</sup> The National Socialist Underground [NSU] carried out a series of murders between 2000 and 2006, mostly against people of Turkish background.

<sup>14</sup> Another leftist housing project in Berlin.

One final detail: the letter was sent from the post office in Tempelhof-Schoenenberg, the same district as the police precinct. We could never imagine that the police would make such an amateur mistake, even though they tried to conceal traces that would reveal who sent the letter. As can be seen in the photos posted with this statement, we were able to make the fingerprints on the letters visible. To do so, we made a solution composed of ninhydrin, ethanol, and acetic acid. We used a spray bottle to mist the letter and hung it up on a shelf to dry at 80 degrees Celsius. After about 10 minutes, the results were developed, as seen in the photos.

*—Some of those targeted by the letter.*

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