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## Far-right Terrorism: Conspiracy and Radicalization – 1945 until Today

April 18 – July 28, 2024

The exhibition addresses the subject of far-right terrorism in Germany and worldwide as a phenomenon of continuing relevance. Far-right terrorism targets both individuals and specific population groups and thus ultimately society as a whole. The assaults, attacks, and murders that far-right terrorists plan and commit are intended to weaken the state and society and to generate a climate of fear.

The exhibition uses examples of local, regional, and international terrorism from 1945 to this day to illustrate the continuing threat posed by the far right. The incidents described include two that took place in Munich—the terrorist attack at the Oktoberfest on September 26, 1980, and that at the Olympia shopping center on July 22, 2016. They demonstrate that far-right terrorism is not a temporary or local phenomenon of our time but rather a recurring aspect of German and international history. The exhibition also shows the consequences of far-right terrorist violence for its victims and their families—grief, enduring trauma, and the painful struggle for recognition of their suffering.

The victims' perspective is a theme throughout the exhibition *Far-right Terrorism*, and it will be particularly reflected in the accompanying program of events. The exhibition covers twenty far-right terrorist incidents that have taken place in Germany and elsewhere in the world since 1945. As well as revealing the terrorists' worldview and their motives, it also shows the consequences for the victims, their families, and society. It also asks how crimes committed by the far right should be handled from a legal point of view. The information is presented thematically in four chapters rather than chronologically.

**Vigilantism – Hostility toward the State**

Far-right terrorists reject a pluralist society. Their terrorist activities aim to weaken the democratic state, which guarantees this societal model. They believe that politicians no longer represent the interests of their own “people.” They therefore systematically target politicians or state authorities. Whereas in the early years of the Federal Republic of Germany the main focus of far-right terrorism was the country's appraisal of Nazi crimes, today terrorism is often motivated by current political conflicts. Kassel District President Walter Lübcke, for example, was murdered in 2019 by a far-right extremist known to the police; the perpetrator gave Lübcke's engagement for refugees as his motive.

Far-right terrorism seeks to generate a feeling of insecurity in the public realm and thus to destabilize the established order and bring about a shift to the right. The bomb attack on the Munich Oktoberfest—the most serious attack in Germany to date—exemplifies this. Some far-right terrorists attack the government and the population with the aim of sparking a “racial war” in order to bring about “white supremacy”. The security organs, politicians, and the public have not always recognized far-right terrorism for what it is, or else they have been slow to respond or even played down the threat.

**Revanchism— The Wrath of the Defeated**

Far-right terrorism against the Allied military administration in Germany began shortly after World War II ended. The acts of violence that were planned or carried out were directed particularly at administrative institutions concerned with democratization and de-Nazification. The terrorists chose well-known and highly symbolic targets for their attacks, such as the Allied Military Tribunal before which the Nuremberg Trials of major war criminals took place and the prison in Spandau where war criminals were incarcerated. Both symbolized the appraisal of German war crimes and the punishment of those responsible. They also attacked members of the occupying powers and the US military as well as representatives of a democratic Germany, the de-Nazification courts known as *Spruchkammer*, and the border installations between East and West Germany. Far-right terrorists launched these attacks because they wanted to stop West Germany embarking on a road toward a democratic future.

**Racism – Violence against Diversity**

Far-right terrorists threaten extreme violence against people whom they consider to be outsiders and not part of their imaginary community. Their actions are motivated by a racist-nationalist view of the world according to which they have to “protect” their own people by maintaining its “purity” and “purging” it of any “foreign” influences. Often this ideology coincides with a fear of being “overrun by foreigners” and with an aggressive rejection of a culturally diverse society.

Far-right terrorists believe they are entitled to combat the alleged “degradation” of a people by brutal means. For those who are excluded, persecuted, or even killed be-

cause of their skin color, origin, or religion, this dehumanizing ideology presents a major danger. They feel constantly threatened in all spheres of life: in their private life, at work, and in public and online.

After the “National Socialist Underground” (NSU) was uncovered in November 2011, the scale of the crimes committed by this right-wing extremist group gradually came to light. Between 2000 and 2007, Beate Zschäpe, Uwe Böhnhardt, and Uwe Mundlos killed at least ten people in several German cities, including Munich. They chose their victims based on their racial origins and killed them at their places of work. For a long time both the German authorities and the public media dismissed the murders as instances of organized crime in the victims’ own milieu, and even after the NSU trial many questions remained unanswered. This reveals an institutional failure and continues to be a blank space in the appraisal of the greatest far-right series of murders in the history of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The attack at Munich’s Olympia shopping center on July 22, 2016, in which nine people died, was likewise initially wrongly viewed by the investigating authorities as a shooting spree without a political motive. After independent experts criticized this assessment and the investigation was reopened, the Bavarian Office of Criminal Investigation concluded in 2019 that the attack had been carried out for “right-wing political motives.” The terrorists were in close contact with other far-right extremists via online platforms. What is more, the Munich murders were carried out on the fifth anniversary of the attacks by the far-right terrorist Anders Behring Breivik in Norway.

#### **Anti-Semitism – Hatred toward Jews**

Anti-Semitism is a central element of far-right ideology. Those who espouse this world view aim to vilify and ostracize Jews and to extinguish Jewish life. They are driven by anti-Semitic conspiracy theories claiming that Jews secretly rule and control the world. Judaism is thus held responsible for all the world’s problems. Anti-Semitism did not begin with the Nazi era but has a long history. In its modern form it can be traced back to the nineteenth century and remains present in dramatic form to this day.

Far-right terrorist activity is directed against a critical examination of the Shoah and against the commemoration of its victims. By denying or playing down the mass murder of European Jews, the far right seeks to obviate questions of guilt and responsibility. Hatred toward Jews, Jewish institutions, and the State of Israel has increasingly been disseminated and radicalized via online platforms and social media in recent decades, but attacks on Jews themselves have also increased. They culminated in 2019 in an attempt to annihilate the Jewish community in Halle, who had gathered in the synagogue to celebrate Yom Kippur, the most important Jewish religious holiday. When the attack failed, the perpetrator, who was not only anti-Semitic but also racist and anti-feminist, shot a female passer-by and forced his way into a snack bar where he murdered another person.

The ideology that unites all the different forms of far-right terrorism is a fanatical belief in a betrayal of the allegedly “superior” in favor of the “inferior” by the democratic elite. They fight those they consider “inferior” but also those they regard as a

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“depraved” democratic elite controlled by foreign powers. Therefore far-right terrorists not only threaten “outsiders” whom they believe do not belong to the “German people,” but also pose a real danger to democracy as a whole, to the state itself, and to social peace. However, neither the state nor society is powerless against this danger. Potential threats need to be more clearly identified and individual options for action given greater attention. Each and every one of us can take a stand against extremist, dehumanizing, and racist language; we can reject it, participate in enlightening people, and show solidarity with the victims.

The exhibition *Far-right Terrorism: Conspiracy and Radicalization – 1945 until Today* was developed by Memorium Nuremberg Trials and sponsored by Stiftung GLS-Treuhand, by the Bavarian government with funding from the budget of the Bavarian State Ministry for Family, Labor, and Social Affairs, and by the Amadeu Antonio Stiftung.\*

**Colophon (short version):**

***Far-right Terrorism: Conspiracy and Radicalization – 1945 until Today*** is an exhibition of Memorium Nuremberg Trials

Idea, concept, and overall lead: Imanuel Baumann

Curatorial lead and project coordination: Steffen Liebscher

Curators: Steffen Liebscher, Rebecca Weiß

Research assistant: Axel Fischer

Director nsdoku: Mirjam Zadoff

Project lead nsdoku: Ulla-Britta Vollhardt

**Accompanying program**

The Munich Documentation Center will use the exhibition as an occasion to shed more light on far-right terrorism in a wide-ranging program of events. The primary focus of the program will be the perspective of the victims of far-right violence. How do they deal with the trauma they have suffered? What significance does remembrance have for the survivors and their families? And how might a culture of memory look that does justice to the needs of a post-migrant society?

Public tours of the exhibition will take place every Tuesday at 5.30 pm and every Sunday at 3 pm; they will also be offered in German sign language on May 2 at 5 pm and on May 17 at 4 pm.

Other events until July 2024 for which we already have definite dates are:

May 6, 2024, 7 pm, film

**Norwegian Democracy (2024)**

In cooperation with DOK.fest München

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June 6, 2024, 7 pm, discussion

**Subcontractors of Guilt – Holocaust Memory and Muslim Belonging in Postwar Germany**

With Esra Özyürek and others

Events in German only:

April 25, 2024, 7 pm, discussion

**Einzel Täter? Rechtsterrorismus seit 1945**

With Barbara Manthe, Uffa Jensen, and Özlem Sarikaya

April 26, June 14, 2024, 3 pm, tour

**(W)Orte rechten Terrors in München**

April 30, 2024, 5 pm, tour in German sign language

**München nach 1945**

May 8, 2024, 7 pm, discussion

**Terror und Trauma. Was rechte Gewalt mit den Betroffenen macht**

With Meyam Schouler-Ocak and others

May 9, June 14, 2024, 5 pm, tour

**Antisemitismus als Staatsdoktrin**

May 9, 2024, 2pm to 6 pm, advanced training session

**Antisemitismus – Ursprung und Kontinuität judenfeindlicher Stereotype**

May 11, 2024, 10 am to 4 pm, seminar

**Antifeminismus in der Neuen Rechten**

June 1, 2024, 10 am to 2 pm, seminar

**Rechter Terror in München**

With Robert Andreasch

June 4, 2024, 7 pm, dramatized reading and discussion

**Moralkonstrukte und rechter Terror**

With Christiane Mudra / investigative theater and Susanne Kaiser

June 20, 2024, 7 pm, discussion

**Was bedeutet inklusive Erinnerungskultur?**

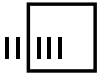
With Ülkü Süngün and others

For current program information please visit: [www.nsdoku.de/programm/aktuell](http://www.nsdoku.de/programm/aktuell).

**Publications**

*Far-right terrorism: Conspiracy and Radicalization – 1945 until Today*, edited by Immanuel Baumann for the Nuremberg Municipal Museums, Memorium Nuremberg Trials, Petersberg 2022

The bilingual (Ger. / Engl.) exhibition catalogue, 120 pp., can be purchased for €19.95



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in bookshops or for a special price of €12 at the information desk of the Munich Documentation Center.

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The publication *Nie wieder. Schon wieder. Immer noch. Rechtsextremismus in Deutschland seit 1945* (Never Again. Back Again. Still There), 280 pp., appeared in 2017 in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name at the Munich Documentation Center. It addresses far-right ideology and action and is likewise available in bookshops (€34) and at the information desk (€20).

\* This press release draws on the accompanying publication *Rechtsterrorismus. Verschwörung und Selbstermächtigung – 1945 bis heute / Far-right terrorism: Conspiracy and Radicalization – 1945 until Today*.

# Far-right Terrorism Conspiracy and Radikalization 1945 until Today

April 18 – July 28, 2024



01

The door of the synagogue in the Paulus district of Halle (Saale), which was damaged in the right-wing extremist attack on the Jewish community on October 9, 2019.  
© picture alliance/dpa/dpa-Zentralbild, Jan Woitas



02

Recovering the dead following the terrorist attack on the Munich Oktoberfest, September 26/27, 1980 | © picture alliance / dpa / Frank Leonhardt



03

Attack on the Liverpool discotheque in Munich, January 7, 1984 | © amw / Süddeutsche Zeitung Photo



04

Memorial event for Habil Kılıç murdered by the NSU on August 29, 2001, in Munich, 2013  
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*I love you*, letter to his parents from Can Leyla, who was killed in the attack on Munich's Olympia shopping center (OEZ) on July 22, 2016, reproduction, Munich, 2010  
Courtesy of: Leyla family, Munich



06

Graffiti *Remember OEZ Munich!* Under the Brudermühl bridge, Munich, 2024  
© NS-Dokumentationszentrum München /  
photo: Connolly Weber Photography



07

View of the exhibition *Far-right Terrorism: Conspiracy and Radicalization – 1945 until Today*, 2024 | © NS Dokumentationszentrum München, photo: Connolly Weber Photography



09

View of the exhibition (doorframe from the Halle synagogue) *Far-right Terrorism: Conspiracy and Radicalization – 1945 until Today*, 2024 | © NS Dokumentationszentrum München, photo: Connolly Weber Photography



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View of the exhibition *Far-right Terrorism: Conspiracy and Radicalization – 1945 until Today*, 2024 | © NS Dokumentationszentrum München, photo: Connolly Weber Photography