



GERMANY

Anti-trade union rampage follows Dresden march

From Graeme Atkinson and Michael Klein in Dresden



Captions

More than 8,000 nazis tramped through the freezing cold in Dresden on 14 February to manipulate, for propaganda purposes, the commemoration of the 1945 Allied bombing of the city.

More than 14,000 anti-nazi protesters in separate demonstrations that only intimidatory police tactics prevented from joining together opposed the annual nazi march mobilised by the right-wing extremist Junge Landsmannschaft Ostpreussen.

The nazi event, now their biggest international public activity, was given a stamp of official approval by Dresden's Christian Democrat (CDU) mayor Helma Orosz and the city's CDU chief Lars Rohwer, who shamefully laid wreaths together with nazi National Democratic Party (NPD) city councillors at the cemetery where many of those killed in the air raids are buried. Stephan Kramer, general secretary of the Central Council of Jews in Germany later sharply criticised the absence of the CDU and Liberals from the anti-nazi ranks.

Although the broad alliance Geh'Denken, backed by the pan-European anti-racist UNITED network, won the active support of the trade unions, Social Democrats (SPD), Greens, Left Party, anti-fascist groups, immigrant organisations, the churches and the Jewish community, the CDU steadfastly refused to join the anti-nazi consensus. On the day, 10,000 people answered Geh'Denken's call for mass anti-nazi marches. A rally was addressed by the SPD leader Franz Müntefering, the Green leader Claudia Roth, Gregor Gysi, leader of the Left Party in the Bundestag, and Michael Sommer, head of the seven million strong German Trades Union Federation.

The organisers had planned to bring anti-fascist marches from three places to a single assembly point, but the police prevented this by violently blocking the path of the *No Pasaran* march, causing clashes in which police vehicles were damaged.

The nazis – overwhelmingly aged in their twenties and mainly from the NPD, the *Freie Kameradschaften* and the violent Autonomous Nationalists – experienced no such obstruction and marched without incident from the main railway station and back, skirting the edge of the city centre. Led by NPD leaders including Udo Voigt, Andreas Molau and Holger Apfel, they were joined by the new German People's Union (DVU) chief Matthias Faust and pond life such as the frequently jailed Austrian extremist Gottfried Küssel and fascists from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Spain, Austria and Sweden. After hearing the ritual claims that the Allied air attacks were a "bombing Holocaust by the Allies", the nazis set off, flanked by police from all over Germany.

After their demonstration the nazis soon cast aside their discipline and embarked on violent forays against trade unionists and other anti-fascists at motorway services in Jena, where they left a 42-year-old trade unionist with a fractured skull, and Eisenach. Among 41 nazis sought by police for the Jena assault are three from Sweden.

Even on their way to the march, a gang of 60 nazis from Duisburg had attacked a minibus carrying trade unionists from Weimar at a motorway services centre near Chemnitz.



Captions