

Und was gegen Rechts?

Erich Ortner

Ich, Student in Graz, werde durch in-und ausländische Medien auf zunehmende Ausländerfeindlichkeit und Rassismus aufmerksam gemacht.

Immer mehr wird Nationalsozialismus zum Thema. Veranstaltungen aller Art werden unter einem neuen Aspekt gesehen. Volksumfragen und

schließlich Wahlen lassen einen politischen Rechtsruck erkennen - nichts Neues.

Folglich Diskussionen zuhause und in Graz - logisch. Beobachtung der Medienlandschaft: Berichte von faschistischen Aktionen, Naziterror, Skinhead-Demos, Angriffe auf AusländerInnen schockieren.

Und Gegenaktionen, Gegendemos oder zumindest

Versuche der Aufklärung, Information der gesellschaftlich Andersdenkenden..wo? Wenn überhaupt gehen sie unter.

Schon droht sich eine gewisse Lethargie in meinem Denken breitzumachen. Angst vor persönlichen Aktionen - so wegen Gewalt und Schmerzen und so ja sowieso.

Aber dann: Wie wohltuend, wie gut, wie aufbauend mein Empfinden als

ich in Berlin am 9.11.91 bei einer antifaschistischen Demonstration war. 60.000 Menschen unterwegs, gingen mit, aktiv, engagiert gegen Rechts. Eine Aktionsveranstaltung gegen Rassismus und Ausländerfeindlichkeit unter dem Motto: "Keine neuen Pogrome- schaut nicht länger weg." Das gibt mir wieder Power, das macht Mut..... die etwas andere Meldung

Taking Aim at Racism

Newsweek, 25. November 1991

Fact or fiction?

A band of skinheads breaks into the home of a Vietnamese family in Leipzig. They beat the father in front of his son, then drag the man from the apartment as the child begs them to stop.

A young girl, perhaps from Kurdistan, plays with her teddy bear in the courtyard of a commie-drab apartment block. Again the skinheads approach. She runs but is trapped against a wall. The thugs douse her with gasoline, then light a match.

If you guessed the first incident to be true, you win a canister of protective Mace. The toughs in Leipzig last week kicked in the Vietnamese man's ribs, manhandled him into the building's cellar and slashed him with knives.

The second incident never happened. It's a television spot, soon to be aired by the



German government, and stops mercifully short of immolation with the injunction "No violence!". But Then, is it completely fiction? At least half a dozen foreigners, mostly Africans and Asians, have in recent months been "torched" by rampaging neo-Nazi gangs.

Fresh atrocities: For months Germans have watched as a wave of racism and xenophobia swept their country. The fall of the Berlin wall and German unification were supposed to herald an era of harmony and good feeling. Communist East Ger-

many was to become, like the Federal Republic, a bastion of democratic tolerance. But it hasn't quite turned out that way. Every day brings news of fresh atrocities, as if Germans had declared open season on Ausländer-foreigners-living within their borders.

In Berlin last week, neo-Nazis dragged an Asian family off a public bus and beat them. Strutting Nazis shouted "Sieg Heil!" And "Ausländer Raus!" in Leipzig and Halle. The Ku Klux Klan, transplanted across the Atlantic, staged a Mississippi-style cross-burning in a woods outside

Berlin. Yet, despite the disturbing echo of 1938, history is not repeating itself. Suddenly- and hearteningly- tens of thousands of Germans are speaking out against the violence, as if to say "never again!"

A turning point came last week. More than 100.000 people marked the 53rd anniversary of Kristallnacht- the Nazi pogrom that began the Holocaust- to demonstrate against hate. There were marches in a dozen major cities from Düsseldorf to Hamburg to Cologne. Kids carried placards: RACISM=FASCISM. Where thugs threatened foreigners, citizens pitched in to protect them by staging all-night vigils around their homes and proclaiming themselves "foreigner friendly". "The vast majority of Germans is appalled by this violence," says Thomas Geisel, a leader of the Social Democratic Party. Now, at long last, he believes that the "silent majority" is awakening.