

'bloody foreigner'

A German newspaper's campaign to expose right-wing hate

'Outing' Racists

Racism, and racist attacks, are on the rise in Germany – and a progressive newspaper decided to fight back, report **Heike Kleffner** and **Meike Jansen**.

MORE THAN 10 000 right-wing extremist crimes were registered for the year 2000 in Germany by the Federal German Police. This number marks an increase of about 40% in racist attacks, anti-Semitic desecrations of Jewish graveyards and neo-Nazi propaganda activities all over Germany. One of these crimes – the murder of Mozambican national Alberto Adriano in June – sparked a new wave of public debates and activities against the rise of an increasingly violent right-wing, extremist youth culture.

The 39-year-old Adriano, father of three children and married to a German, was beaten and stomped to death by three young neo-Nazis in the inner city park of Dessau, a city internationally known as the home of the renowned Bauhaus architectural school. Adriano had been living in Germany for almost 20 years, and his death sent shockwaves through the German public. Suddenly, the daily racist discriminations and terror that foreigners were experiencing in these towns became a subject of conversation. Politicians started to talk openly about the hegemony of a right-wing youth culture,

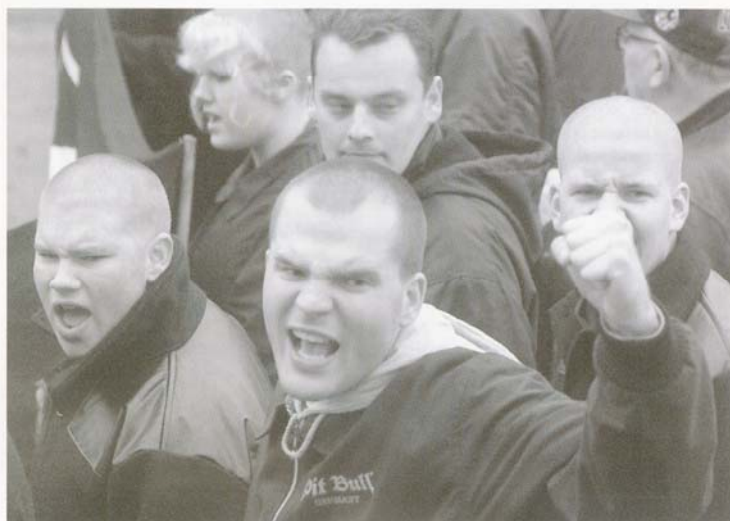
'loud-mouthed half-breeds'

"We want to support all those who until now had to stand by themselves up against right-wing terror" – the 'Z' Campaign

especially in small rural towns in the former East Germany; newspapers reported on the situation in these towns; and a lot of people affected by right-wing activities started to talk about taking action.

A week after Adriano's death, the national leftist newspaper *Die Tageszeitung* ('Die Taz') from Berlin initiated a campaign called 'Z'. The letter 'Z' stands for the first letter in the German word 'Zivilcourage' – 'civil or citizens' courage' in English.

The idea was simple, but effective, especially when one looks at the history and the readers of *Die Tageszeitung*. The newspaper was founded 22 years ago in the wake of the founding of the Green Party, which had just come onto the political stage in Germany. From the start, *Die Tageszeitung* has had its own publishing house, and so has been able



Neo-nazi rally: last year police recorded 10 000 right-wing crimes in Germany.

to maintain its independence from big publishing corporations. The newspaper's readers are said to be especially socially conscious.

When Die Taz started its Z campaign, Barbara Junge, one of the initiators of the campaign within the newspaper, wrote about its aims: "We want to support all those who until now had to stand by themselves up against right-wing terror. And we want to encourage those who until now have not dared to stand up – for whatever reasons. Those who do not want to silently stand by and watch are invited to participate in the campaign."

Die Taz itself initiated Z with two page

one stories which caused controversial public debates. One story contained quotes from politicians and ministers from the main German political parties – the Social Democrats, Christian Democrats etc – which had racist content or messages. The aim was to show that racism and the ensuing violence are rooted in the midst of society, not at its fringes, and that politicians bear at least some responsibility for the establishment of a strong right wing when they make racist and chauvinist remarks. The second story was a photo board of the heads of 22 nationally known neo-Nazi cadres. The intent was to rob the leading figures of the neo-Nazi movement of their anonymity – a move which caused a lot of debate both within the newspaper, but also among fellow journalists and readers.

In the wake of these two stories and Z's launch, many people immediately joined the campaign, largely Die Taz's readers and fellow journalists. Z never wanted to replace grassroots initiatives, but it has pursued one main goal: to connect people active on anti-racist issues and to provide thorough information on racism and related issues to interested people.

Z has its own pages on the Die Taz website, and upon request the campaign organises events and provides educational materials, for example to schools and teachers. The campaign is acting on two tracks: people from all over Germany call the Z number or send

emails asking for help, ie with organising an event with an expert; or, on the other track, Z stands for specific reporting in the newspaper itself – articles and research focused on the issue of right-wing extremism and the situation of the non-white population in Germany. Z started small but by now has turned into a network of finely woven contacts and local support systems. It has become one of many backbones of civil society in Germany.

HEIKE KLEFFNER and MEIKE JANSEN both work for *Die Tageszeitung* in Berlin, and are members of the Z campaign. Jansen presented the project at the Global Narratives of Race conference in Cape Town in December.

'bastard-culture'