



D-A-S-H Dossier #6: "Residency Rights for Victims of Racist Violence" – a Campaign and its Initiators

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1. Editorial

Our current dossier is devoted to the campaign initiated by agOra, the Working Committee for Counseling Projects for Victims of Racist, Extreme-Right and Anti-Semitic Violence. This campaign is committed to unlimited residency rights for refugees and migrants who have become victims of racist violence. We will talk to the campaign's initiators and take a look at individual victim counseling projects and their daily work. A case study based on ABAD's work in Thuringia will serve to represent innumerable cases all over Germany.

Public awareness of violence and discrimination is often focused on the young, extreme-right perpetrators. Youth work in particular has concentrated very hard in the past few years on "perpetrator work" and the resocialization issues associated with it. The victims of the crimes receive far less attention, however, and so experience neither greater society's solidarity with their plight, nor concrete support. [German media](#) plays a not insignificant part in this problem. All too often, the perpetrators even meet with [approval](#) and it is exactly this that marginalizes the victims even further and confirms the perpetrators in their actions. In an interview with D-A-S-H, the journalist Frank Jansen, of the Berliner Tagesspiegel newspaper, talks about the perception of right-wing extremism in the media. He points to the differences among published victim statistics, criticizes the "macabre victim hierarchy" in the media and challenges state-sponsored "Anti-Right Initiatives".

After calls for an "Aufstand der Anständigen" [Uprising of the Respectable, a state-sponsored campaign against right-wing violence] in 2000 made extreme-right violence a hot discussion topic and the support of antiracist and antifascist counter-initiatives temporarily popular, the [German government's strategies for fighting right-wing extremism](#) could be used to bring about new possibilities for working with victims of right-wing violence. For projects and associations in the East, the sponsorship of victim counseling organizations via CIVITAS became the mainstay of their support work. The [continuation of this sponsorship](#), however, is directly dependent on the outcome of the federal elections, as the President of the Bundestag indirectly confirms in an interview with D-A-S-H.

Opferperspektive e.V. (Victim Perspective) has developed some preventative strategies against racist violence, which they present in their report, "Focusing on the Victims." The association, which has been active in Brandenburg for four years, works on the basis of an analysis of a "perpetrator society". The authors list the basic steps that need to be taken in order to ensure the stabilization of a democratically oriented youth culture, and hope thus to provide extreme-right-oriented, young perpetrators and their environment with a liberating alternative.

The list of victim counseling centers is not only intended for victims but also for interested people looking for opportunities to provide direct support where it is needed and wanted. In order to provide wide-spread and extensive help, the counseling centers are always on the lookout for volunteers and supporters in local communities.

- [German media](http://www.drehscheibe.org/leitfaden_medienverantwortung.html) http://www.drehscheibe.org/leitfaden_medienverantwortung.html

- [approval](http://www.uni-marburg.de/zv/news/archiv/presse00/02-08-2000.html) <http://www.uni-marburg.de/zv/news/archiv/presse00/02-08-2000.html>
- [German government's strategies for fighting right-wing extremism](http://www.bmi.bund.de/Annex/de_22125/Download.pdf) http://www.bmi.bund.de/Annex/de_22125/Download.pdf
- [continuation of this sponsorship](http://www.berlinonline.de/wissen/berliner_zeitung/archiv/2002/0812/politik/0038/index.html?keywords=thierse+civitas&ok=OK%21&match=strict&author=&ressort=&von=12.8.2002&bis=&mark=thierse+civitas) http://www.berlinonline.de/wissen/berliner_zeitung/archiv/2002/0812/politik/0038/index.html?keywords=thierse+civitas&ok=OK%21&match=strict&author=&ressort=&von=12.8.2002&bis=&mark=thierse+civitas

2. "Residency Rights for Victims of Racist Violence" - A campaign and its initiators

The Working Committee for Counseling Projects for Victims of Racist, Extreme-Right and Anti-Semitic Violence (agOra) – Introduction of the umbrella organization, based on an interview with Rahel Krückels, project member of ABAD and one of the initiators of agOra

The Working Committee for the Counseling Project for Victims of Racist, Extreme-Right and Anti-Semitic Violence (agOra) started their work in the beginning of June, 2002. agOra was established in order to bring to public attention at a federal level the concerns and issues of counseling projects for victims of racism, anti-Semitism and right-wing extremism, and to consolidate the experience and expertise of individual projects. Until then the counseling projects' work had been uncoordinated and had taken place only at a state level. All agOra projects share the goal of providing the victims with quick professional help and confronting society with the victim's perspective.

The victim counseling projects aim to change social work from being focused on the perpetrator to being supportive of victims of extreme-right violence. This entails sensitizing society as a whole to the need for such a change. Rahel Krückels, one of the initiators of the campaign and a member of the Thuringian victim counseling project, has noticed that media perception has changed and that particularly in Brandenburg, courts are giving increasing consideration to the possibility that crimes have an extreme-right background. Ms. Krückels reports the example of summary court hearings being initiated on the grounds of strengthening victim rights. These hearings are started just days after the crime and so provide the possibility of quickly and directly "punishing" the perpetrator and avenging the crime. This means for the victims of crimes that they can experience the condemnation and conviction of the perpetrator. There is no month or year-long wait before the trial begins. All too often, it has happened that the main witnesses of an attack, the victims themselves, were deported before the trial began. Or the crime simply happened too long ago and therefore could no longer be prosecuted. In case it comes to a conviction, this can also have an effect on the psychological state of the victim, for example on how the victim copes with the trauma. But, says Ms. Krückels, this practice of summary court hearings can also be to the victim's disadvantage. She points out that in the short time available, an incidental action cannot be thoroughly prepared. This is, however, often the only way to claim in court that a crime has an extreme-right background or to present the full extent of the victim's physical and psychological suffering.

The problems confronting the victims' counselors are always the same: sometimes they aren't even able to find the names and addresses of the victims, whose cases the project members often only know of through mention of them in the media. The counselors have found access blocked to refugee residences. Residency restrictions significantly hamper and delay office visits to doctors and therapists, for example, and sometimes completely prevent them.

Another problem that often occurs is that the victims of attacks are themselves charged – because they have defended themselves, for example. Within local communities, attacks are often played down, being perceived and represented as the conflicts of "youth cliques"; the attacks' racist backgrounds are completely ignored. Rahel Krückels points out that there's another problem, in Berlin for example: racist police violence. In such cases, it is often even more difficult to continue to investigate on the part of the victim, and to make the public aware of the situation.

Before the Parliamentary election, agOra challenged parties and politicians with "electoral touchstones" and asked them to say where they stood as regards the campaign for [Residency Rights for Victims of Racist Violence](#) and the continued sponsorship of the program, [Civitas](#). Their reaction until now, says Rahel Krückel, has been reserved. It was not possible to get a clear statement from the CDU on the programs against right-wing extremism and for residency rights for victims of racist violence. Katherina Reiche from the CDU only spoke to the continuation of Civitas, saying that "I am of the opinion that these various programs must be examined where it's necessary. An appraisal is thus needed in the new legislative period."

The PDS and the Greens give the campaign consistently good marks, although the ruling parties (including the SPD) refer to the revision of the immigration law and the "hardship provision" it makes (e.g. for cases in which potential deportees would face persecution upon being returned to their country of origin). This new provision envisages a state-level commission which makes decisions on a case-to-case basis and in accordance with humanitarian criteria. These "hardship commissions" would be the province of the Bundesländer and would not be obligatory. The calls of the campaign, however, are formulated without regard for the consequences – Krückel says that victims of racist violence should be accorded unrestricted residency rights in all cases, regardless of, among other things, the seriousness of an attack's consequences. Nevertheless, no statements can be made now regarding possible effects of the new law, as no practical experience has yet been gained.

Victim counseling centers in the former East and West Germanies work quite differently: the counseling centers in the East are primarily funded by Civitas and beyond that work on a voluntary basis. A few projects work only

with volunteers. The counseling center projects that are in the West of the Republic are excluded from Civitas funding and have been working for years on a volunteer basis. Networking between the projects has progressed significantly since the establishment of the umbrella organization, agOra, in the beginning of June, 2002 and is intended to enable continuation of the work when Civitas support ends. According to Rahel Krückels, they don't intend to let their counseling work degenerate into a purely charitable issue, but to expand it and confront right-wing extremist and racism in the communities in which racist attacks and discrimination happens. This includes the support of initiatives and projects in which young people stand up for democracy and against racism.

The Campaign: Residency Rights for Victims of Racist Violence agOra's call for action

In the last two years or so, public awareness of acts of racist violence has increased. The protection of potential victims and the redressing of such offences have become issues of public debate. This increase in public attention, however, has not led to a decrease in the number of crimes.

A particularly large number of the victims of racist violence are migrants and refugees. Crimes like these affect them especially seriously when their residence in Germany is not secure. Their general living situation, already difficult due to a lack of social contact and insecure prospects for the future, is not helped by the physical and psychological results of an act of violence.

Thus we call for permanent residency rights for victims of racist violence. This right to residency must be strictly independent of the results [of the crime and must not be dependent on any further conditions.

A decisive aspect of the call for residency rights for victims of racist violence is its symbolic content: society announces its willingness to assume responsibility for the injustice and to oppose the intended outcome of the violent offence, namely the deportation of the victim. Instead of the attempted expulsion, a permanent secure right of abode is granted. This demonstrates solidarity, encompassing emergency assistance and more.

The demand for permanent residency rights for victims of racist violence is grounded in three basic tenets:

1. Residency rights as compensation for victims and their social environment

Racist attacks imply a denial of the victim's right to be or to reside in Germany. The perpetrators derive from this denial a legitimization of their violent attacks. The damage resulting from such attacks, however, is not exclusively limited to the physical or psychological effects on the victim. As the victims and their social environment quite clearly understand, the attack is not directed against the individual but against a particular group of people. As a consequence, a racist attack in the form of fear, intimidation, limitation of freedom of movement, and disintegration not only affects the individual victims but also their social environment. Because of the persistently large number of such attacks, these effects cannot be countered by measures of legal prosecution alone. (This is not least due to the substantial time-lapse between the crime and the criminal's conviction.) Neither can the damage be redressed by financial compensation from the assailant or the state. Rather, victims without secure residency status should be granted permanent residency. It is only through this form of compensation that victims and their corresponding "social environments" will discover that victims of racist attacks are not left to fend for themselves, but experience clear support from society.

2. Residency rights as a political signal to the offender and to society

The offender disputes the victim's right to live in Germany and subsequently derives for himself the right to violently attack him or her.

By granting residency rights, the planned outcome of the attack is thwarted and the opposite result is achieved. In granting residency rights, the offenders are quite simply shown that their actions achieve precisely the opposite of what they are aiming at. Simultaneously the right of abode for the victims of racist attacks signals an acceptance of responsibility and an acceptance of the fact that racism and the violence that accompanies it are results of the failure of politics and civil society.

3. Residency rights for humanitarian reasons

People lacking secure residency status often find themselves in extremely critical living situations. Their freedom of movement is often limited; they are not allowed to work; they lack social contact and their future prospects are completely uncertain. Because of this, many of the after-effects of racist attacks are further reaching than amongst other types of victims. Seen against this background, the granting of residency rights creates additional security and prospects which enable victims to better deal with and recover from their injuries.

[Residency Rights for Victims of Racist Violence](http://www.kamalatta.de/opferperspektive/wps_agora.html)

<http://www.kamalatta.de/opferperspektive/wps_agora.html>

[Civitas](http://www.kamalatta.de/opferperspektive/wps_civitas.html)

<http://www.kamalatta.de/opferperspektive/wps_civitas.html>

A case study taken from the campaign, "Residency Rights for Victims of Racist Violence"

(In cooperation with agOra)

On January 27, 2001 in Suhl, Thurginia, a 42-year-old Vietnamese man named Chien was beaten up by several of the local right-wing extremists. The injuries that Chien suffered were so serious that he had to stay in the hospital. The psychological trauma that has preyed on him since, however, is worse than the physical mistreatment itself. He still suffers from sustained headaches, high blood pressure and a fear syndrome. He is afraid to go on the streets in the evenings without accompaniment.

Chien is still undergoing medical treatment and recently started an urgently needed course of therapy to deal with the psychological effects of the attack. The immigration authorities in Meiningen have forbidden deportation until his therapy has ended; his residency will be legally "tolerated" until then. This toleration, however, simply means that deportation cannot take place while the toleration is valid. It can be revoked at short notice, and at any time, and does not accord him secure residency status. It must be feared that Chien will be deported after his therapy is completed.

The Meiningen authorities do not take into account the fact that Chien's recovery depends on his having secure residency status. Over the years, Chien has established a life for himself in Zella-Mehlis. But it is now, of all times, in his current situation as a victim of a violent attack, that he would have to leave the place where he has worked and lived for years. Regardless of when his departure happens, it must seem to be a "continuation" of this rupture in his life.

Chien is still not able to return to his work as a chef. Losing his job has led to his legal toleration status being shortened from 3 months to only one month at a time. According to the immigration authorities responsible for his case, this is normal procedure in the case of jobless refugees. The perspective of the victim, however, is not considered. Chien sees the shortened toleration periods as an indirect accusation of guilt for his state of health.

The court stated in its judgement that the perpetrator "should be seen as belonging at least to the extreme-right sub-culture." He had already been sentenced for several related offenses. Another indication that this was a racist attack is that the victim was suddenly attacked, i.e. that there was no direct reason for the attack.

Although Chien reports having been attacked by 4 assailants, only one perpetrator was convicted of and sentenced for grievous bodily harm. The other assailants have not yet been officially identified. For this reason, Chien filed a new charge in April, 2002. Deportation would rob him of the possibility of his experiencing at least partial redress through the sentencing of his assailants. It would furthermore remove the person best able to identify the assailants. His deportation would disable him from actively taking part in the conviction and necessary sentencing of the assailants.

The Meiningen immigration authorities are still convinced that it is in the public's interest to end Chien's residency as soon as possible. With their act, the assailants also imply that the victim should not be allowed to stay here. They will feel confirmed and strengthened in their role as "executors of the public interest." Even if this is not the authorities' intention, deportation is in effect the completion of the act that the assailants began: the victim is guaranteed no protection; he or she is not to stay here; they don't belong here.

The immigration authorities, furthermore, are denying any responsibility as a state institution for the acts of its citizens. The victims of racist attacks can only understand this kind of behaviour on the part of governmental institutions as contempt for the suffering they have endured.

If avowals of commitment to the values of civil society and to political engagement against right-wing extremism are to be taken seriously, then Chien and others who are being physically driven out of here by right-wing extremists must not be deported by German institutions.

3. " Right-wing extremism makes headlines when it can sell papers. That's always been the case."

D-A-S-H Interview with Frank Jansen (Reporter with the Tagesspiegel, Berlin)

Frank Jansen has been reporting on the causes and effects of right-wing extremism for the Berlin newspaper, Tagesspiegel, since 1990. In his reports and features, he has discussed what motivates Nazi skinheads, but his primary concern has been with publicizing the way the victims live and die. In an interview with D-A-S-H, he explains why extreme-right violence is so difficult to fight in East Germany and why media coverage of right-wing extremism has disappeared in many places.

In September 2000, the Tagesspiegel, together with the Frankfurter Rundschau, published the widely respected chronicle, "Giving the victims a face." The editors had investigated numerous deaths since 1990 and documented the whole extent of extreme-right violence in the fates of the 93 people who had been killed by right-wing extremists. How many more victims have there been in the past 2 years?

Frank Jansen: We're working now on a new chronicle. In the last year we've researched the cases of 4 fatalities. In addition, there are a series of unsolved cases which we suspect have extreme-right associations. This year 2 more cases have been added to the list, so that we can say with certainty that there have been 99 victims of racist violence since 1990.

The latest report of the Federal Office for the Defense of the Constitution indicates a clear decline in extreme-right violence. According to the report, there weren't any extreme-right violent acts in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in 2001.

That's nonsense, of course. In 2001 a new classification method was introduced, which was a great improvement, but some Bundesländer only grudgingly agreed to it. Until then, the only extreme-right acts of violence that were registered were those that directly endangered the basic order of liberal democracy. When a drunken youth beats up a homeless person, they usually don't want to bring about the fall of the constitution. That's why acts like these were left out of the statistics. With the advent of the reform, victim groups were defined for the first time. Now when a homeless person is attacked for unknown reasons, the police can initially assume extreme-right motivations and report the incident as an extreme-right act of violence.

In that case, we wouldn't expect a decrease in the statistical number of extreme-right acts of violence, but an increase.

In Brandenburg, there actually were more extreme-right acts of violence and, above all, propaganda offenses registered. On the whole, though, there's a lot of resistance to the reform in the new Länder (former East Germany). Driven by fear that increasing numbers would cause them to be defamed as Neonazi strongholds, some Länder have tried to fudge the numbers. In Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in 2001, the police counted about 40 acts of violence with right-wing motivations, but did not categorize them as extreme-right. But because the Federal Office for the Defense of the Constitution supposedly - or perhaps really does - only asks for the extreme-right acts of violence, the capital city of Schwerin decided not to declare any extreme-right acts of violence. The numbers of right-wing-motivated, but not necessarily extreme-right, crimes in other Bundesländer are not represented in the statistics of the Federal Office for the Defense of the Constitution.

Otto Schily [Germany's Minister of the Interior] attributed the numbers to the success of the government's efforts. In 2000, aid programs were launched at the federal and state level in order to support counter-right initiatives. Violent criminals were supposed to be shown through a mobilization of civil society that they're not approved of. Have attitudes noticeably changed in local communities?

Hardly. When Manfred Stolpe [Cabinet Member under Schröder] explained in 2000 that he had underestimated right-wing extremism and saw this as a serious mistake, he spoke for many local politicians in Brandenburg. But the majority of the population, in my opinion, isn't being reached by these programs against the extreme right. In a [current study](#) that surveyed one thousand West and East Germans each, the Free University in Berlin together with Leipzig University found a consistent ratio of 30% xenophobes in East Germany, while in West Germany extreme-right and anti-Semitic attitudes are on the rise. This is an ideal breeding ground for violence. Neither politics together with the media, nor independent counter-right initiatives have succeeded in breaking the fateful connection between day-to-day racism and the violence practiced by young people who feel they are executing the public's will. Young skinheads still feel sufficiently authorized by their social environment to attack people that they see as inferior.

The media have been quite involved, also on the political level, in the fight against right-wing extremism. What have they been able to accomplish?

The "Aufstand der Anständigen" [Uprising of the Respectable, a state-sponsored campaign against right-wing violence] that was announced in the summer of 2000 was initially purely a media issue. That changed when in November 2000 around 200,000 people marched against right-wing extremism in the streets of Berlin. The great majority of the population, however, remained passive. Then some serious mistakes were made. In particular, the hysteria surrounding the unsolved death of a child in Sebnitz in November 2000 damaged the credibility of the media. As a result, they largely backed off the subject of right-wing extremism. The Islamic attacks on the USA on September 11, 2001, caused right-wing extremism to retire completely into the background.

"Right-wing extremism in Germany is too dangerous. The issue cannot be allowed to be at the mercy of the media's financial interests and only make headlines when the Nazis have struck again." This declaration was made in August 2000 upon the founding of "Netz gegen Rechtsextremismus" [Network against Right-Wing Extremism], which was supported by numerous media organizations. Two years later, the project is on its last legs because none of its media partners is willing to continue financing it.

Right-wing extremism makes headlines when it can sell papers. That's always been the case. The issue made headlines with the riots in Rostock and Hoyerswerda. When the police woke up and a few neo-Nazi organizations were outlawed, its popularity waned again. In 1996 a new wave of violence broke out, but it didn't get the same level of attention as before. The media as well as the public had had more than enough and didn't want to hear any more about right-wing extremism. Until 2000 even racially-motivated murders like that of the Mozambican, Alberto Adriano, in Dessau, were accepted as a part of daily life. It was reported and regretted, and then you returned to the order of the day. This changed abruptly with the assault in Düsseldorf in July 2000. Many factors came together here, resulting in right-wing extremism suddenly being recognized as a serious problem again: it wasn't an assault with a baseball bat, but a bomb attack; it didn't happen in the East, but in the respectable West; and people of Jewish extraction were affected.

In the press coverage, it was easy to come away with the impression that extreme-right violence was directly primarily at asylum seekers and migrants. It's not generally clear that in Brandenburg, for example, half of the people attacked are alternative youth. Is the media drawing a distorted picture?

As far as the media is concerned, there is a macabre hierarchy of victims. Attacks on people of Jewish extraction are judged differently than attacks on Africans, leftists, punks or homeless people. The disrespect for some victim groups is absolutely unacceptable. I wish that the attention that is given – and rightly so - to Jewish victims as a consequence of Germany's Nazi past would be given to all people that are attacked by right-wing extremists. The disrespect that is shown to other victims is also dangerous to Jewish victims because it means that extreme-right violence is only being seen as a partial problem and isn't seen in its full dimensions.

Organizations devoted to protecting and helping victims of extreme-right violence complain that the public debates the perpetrators' problems much more than those of the victims.

Media interest in the victims has increased somewhat since the summer of 2000. I also have the impression that the Brandenburger Opferperspektive (Brandenburg Victim Perspective) and similar organizations are receiving a certain recognition for their work. The Bundestag has provided a fund of 10 million marks, from which some victims can be compensated quickly and without bureaucratic hassle. Others, however, cannot. There may be more cases in which people intervene when an African is attacked in the subway. They are still the exceptions, however, and not the rule. In view of deeply seated day-to-day racism, you can't expect much empathy for the victims. There is certainly no reason to give the all-clear; extreme-right violence and racism remain persistent problems. Civil society doesn't have the energy for a sustainable change.

[current study](http://www.uni-leipzig.de/presse2002/bild/rechtsextremismus.pdf) <http://www.uni-leipzig.de/presse2002/bild/rechtsextremismus.pdf>

4. Focusing on the Victims – Moving away from analyzing a "perpetrator society" to promoting development of solidarity with the victims

by members of "Opferperspektive e.V." (Victim Perspective)

Focusing on the Victims -

We, the authors of this article, are a 4-member team called "Victim Perspective". There are now 6 people working for the association. Our counseling center in Potsdam works together with 4 other (youth) projects in Brandenburg, which look after victims of extreme-right violence in their own local regions. Since the middle of 1998, we've been organizing help and support for people who have become victims of extreme-right or racially motivated violence in Brandenburg. We started this work when we realized that we no longer wanted to accept the permanent marginalization of and threat to certain sections of the population.

Almost every week people are attacked by assailants who are motivated by right-wing extremism and hate of everything supposedly "ungerman". Insults and threats are commonplace. Physical attacks are not unusual. They are directed especially against people from other countries, but also against the disabled and homeless and against alternative youth. In politics, social work and the media, the behaviour of the extreme-right offenders is mostly explained in terms of their bad career perspectives, a lack of youth facilities and parental mistakes, and calls for action are made in these areas. Their victims, on the other hand, and the urgently needed changes in their living conditions, are all too often ignored.

The aim of the project, Victim Perspective, is to help those affected not to assume a passive victim's role, but to become active and develop new perspectives with other people. This includes initiating or promoting the development of solidarity with the potential victims by raising public awareness of what their lives are like. Our goal is not only to enable people to sympathize with the fates of single individuals. It's also about recognizing the dangers posed to democratic civil society by marginalization. Solidarity with the victims of extreme-right violence and the simultaneous development of initiatives that are directed against marginalization efforts offer active alternatives to powerlessness and fear. Creating organizations against marginalization decreases the influence of extreme-right ideology, deprives extreme-right violence of society's alleged approval and weakens extreme-right positions of power.

The social context of racist attacks

In 1998 the Brandenburg police counted 100 racist and extreme-right acts of violence. The estimated number of unregistered cases is high because many victims do not report to the police what has happened to them, or because the police simply do not file these reports. The offenders are mostly young men that belong to extreme-right cliques. It is the social climate of racism and ethnic nationalism, however, that makes attacks like these at all possible. Average Brandenburgers refuse to help people who have been attacked or they participate themselves in racist mobbing. Racism is not a marginal phenomenon, but comes from the very heart of society. According to surveys, over half the population think that foreigners profit from the social system and take jobs away from Germans. It's no wonder that extreme-right violent offenders feel themselves to be the executors of the people's will.

An extreme-right or racially-motivated attack does not only affect the individual victim. Although it is an individual that is directly hit, everyone is the target. Everyone that fits into the right-wing extremists' concept of the enemy: migrants, alternative and leftist youths (or "parasites" in Nazi jargon), the disabled, the homeless, gays and lesbians. Fear spreads, and many people are intimidated. Dangerous places - a train station after dark, maybe, or a town square in front of a mall - are avoided. The country is pervaded by "no-go areas". A lot of people can no longer move freely, some - especially refugees in "shelters" - live like they're in prison; others - migrants in Berlin, for example - no longer go to Brandenburg.

Violence and extreme-right hegemony

These developments suit organized right-wing extremists down to the ground. What the victims refer to as "no-go areas", they call "national befreite Zonen" ("nationally liberated zones"). The right-wing extremists, and no longer the state institutions, thereby exercise social control. They possess local hegemony, whether it be cultural, in that they act as forerunners of an ethnic-nationalist life style, or repressive, in that they persecute and intimidate people who don't conform to their life style. The fight for hegemony is fought in almost every school, every youth club, in many villages and city districts, and the right-wing extremists are conquering more and more territory. In many places in Brandenburg, there is no alternative to the extreme-right mainstream. Being right-wing extremist is normal. If you don't want trouble, you conform. Violence plays a central role in the establishment and maintenance of extreme-right hegemony. Threats of violence and targeted attacks are used in the attempt to drive out youths that don't conform to the extreme-right mainstream.

There are many examples of this process:

A "neutral" youth club, which holds monthly "Independent Discos", is visited regularly by groups of extreme-right skinheads who threaten the attendees and organize serious attacks against the youth club. The youth club leader wants to deal with the violence by trying to integrate the extreme-right skinheads into the club activities. Their presence changes the situation in the club. The behaviour of the right-wing extremists, their slogans and the strength of their group, lead to the young people who don't think like them being forced to decide whether to conform or to stay away. Because the people who remain in the club are not interested in them, the Independent Discos are stopped. Public criticism of the youth club leader (who is a well-respected figure in the city) by the youths who have been attacked is not permitted. Letters to the editor are not printed. The youths feel abandoned by the city and eventually back down. A youth club that used to be "neutral" is increasingly dominated by the right.

Public reaction and its consequences

This example allows us to see another aspect of the problem: the process by which the non-right is driven out is played out before the public eye, but the public does not see what is happening. When the young people who have been attacked try to gain public attention, they fail. No one seems to stand up for them. They're written off as leftists or left-wing extremists. Threats on the one hand and deliberate ignorance on the other combine in the end to successfully drive out young people who represent philosophical approaches that are democratic and emancipatory. Society is left on the one hand with young people who feel it's better to take no position at all, and on the other with extreme-right-oriented youths.

The effects of an assault on the social environment of the victim

In view of society's deliberate ignorance, an extreme-right-motivated assault has consequences beyond the injury and threat of an individual that extend to the general community under attack. The people affected understand very well that, apart from rare cases of assaults motivated by revenge, the assault is not directed at them personally. Individuals are attacked as representatives of all those who do not want to conform to the extreme-right consensus. The feeling of being under threat spreads fast.

Failure to develop solidarity with the victims

Violence as a means of establishing and maintaining extreme-right hegemony is only successful because so many people remain passive and look away. Nonconformist youths, foreigners, emigrants, etc., are not only beaten up, but are left to fend for themselves, both during the attack and after. When a refugee is attacked, the question is asked why "people like that" are on the streets at night. A teacher that is actively involved against the right and gets beaten up so badly by extreme-right skinheads that he has to go to the hospital is not visited there by his colleagues or his bosses. As he is lying on the ground, he is told that he should stay out of the anti-fascist movement.

The act of violence is a demand to act in accordance with the perpetrator's world view. Everyone is being made to understand that they have no chance against the perpetrators because no-one will support them. Lack of solidarity works to confirm this. Failure to develop solidarity with the attackees also affects the perpetrators. It confirms their sense of society's secret approval of their actions.

This indifference and lack of solidarity with the attackees has other consequences: the impression is made that society is afraid of extreme-right thugs. It seems as though no-one wants to confront them, as though they were invulnerable. Their "success" provides them with new converts. Who doesn't want to be on the winning side? Power is attractive. They're greeted with respect on the streets. They don't have to worry about ostracism.

How do attackees deal with these experiences?

For the attackees, the failure of "bystanders" to react both during the attack and afterwards is like a second injury. They too feel this indifference to be approval of the extreme-right perpetrators. Foreigners and nonconformist youths feel even more ostracized and confirmed in their mistrust of German society. An attack causes the victim to feel insecure, resulting in sustained feelings of vulnerability and of being damaged. Depending on the individual's psychological constitution and his or her degree of social integration, dealing with psychological injuries usually takes longer than the relatively quick healing of bodily injuries. For refugees who find themselves in a hostile environment that they cannot escape because of legal restrictions, symbolic gestures can mean a lot after being attacked: spontaneous sympathy, public avowals of solidarity, flowers sent to the hospital where they are staying. All these things can help them win back their self-confidence and sense of security. Democratically oriented youth culture can be promoted by offering programs and activities in youth facilities that are aimed at them. In so doing, we can make it clear to them that they too should be a part of this society. Victims as well as extreme-right perpetrators would be clearly shown that these acts of violence will not be tolerated and certainly are not welcome. But when ostracism remains a social reality, the development of a democratic civil society is bound to fail.

Learning processes for counselors

Intervention in the form of concrete help for victims of extreme-right violence is one way for the members of victim counseling centers to put their anti-racist and anti-fascist ideals into practice. As opposed to only seeing the problem of right-wing extremism from a rationalist/analytical angle, dealing directly with the consequences of extreme-right violence allows people to develop empathy with the victims and deepen the emotional roots of their anti-fascist convictions. It is often the people who are themselves threatened by extreme-right violence, either because of their involvement in social issues or because of their nonconformist cultural orientation, that can be persuaded to develop and act upon their feelings of solidarity with victims of extreme-right violence. Talking to other victims of extreme-right violence helps one to recognize the connections between different concepts of the enemy in extreme-right ideology. Attacks on foreigners or on so-called "parasites" are similar in that the act of violence is not directed against an individual. Seen objectively, every act of violence against an individual is part of an extreme-right strategy of ostracizing and driving out groups of people they don't like. Dealing directly with the situations faced by refugees who have been attacked helps people to see the relationship between racist violence, racist attitudes and institutionalized discrimination. Once this is understood, active involvement with victims also offers the chance to redirect social discourse from isolated observation of (extreme-right) violence, which is the dominant approach in public debate now, to seeing right-wing extremism as a problem in all of its social aspects.

One of the questions behind all of these strategic deliberations is what motivates engagement against right-wing extremism and how to develop and maintain it.

For many anti-fascist youths, it was their own experience with extreme-right violence that inspired them to become politically active. If they are no longer directly confronted with it, or if they or their youth clubs are not affected, their desire to continue to be actively engaged often drops off.

Concrete support of victims of racist and extreme-right violence can extend young people's political engagement and also build bridges to other worlds and ways of life. Practical work enables new alliances to be formed and helps overcome widespread marginalization and loneliness.

For a democratically oriented youth culture

Here, we would like to stress another aspect of supporting victims of extreme-right violence as an anti-fascist strategy, namely the stabilization of a democratically oriented youth culture that provides an emancipatory alternative to extreme-right-oriented youth culture. A youth culture that is an alternative to the extreme-right mainstream means that the youths of various different subcultures are immune to the right-wing extremists' contempt for mankind, to the fascist cult of strength and to the collective myths of the extreme right. They themselves create an alternative, a lived counter-position to the extreme right. Self-determined engagement, autonomy and self-organization are important opportunities for the youths to learn and implement democratic values and approaches. Anti-fascism is thus embedded in a societal, emancipatory understanding of democracy. After all, this should not only be an alternative to the right, but also a positive expression of a civil democracy's concept of self. (see also [D-A-S-H Dossier #3 "Jugendarbeit gegen Rassismus"](#))

Elements of a democratic strategy

We understand the support of victims of extreme-right violence as part of a possible anti-fascist strategy against right-wing extremism and, instead of a conclusion, would like to outline what we feel to be its central elements:

First, we should mobilize societal solidarity with the victims of extreme-right violence, which to a large extent should comprise practical support for the victims. The aim of this solidarity is to make the consequences of the attack easier to bear and, most importantly, to thereby counteract intimidation. Furthermore, in the process of supporting the victims, a community can develop which can prevent further attacks and offer mutual support. The people supporting the victims will be confronted with the victim's point of view. The attacks are analyzed in relation to day-to-day, institutional as well as non-institutional discrimination and ostracism, allowing the violence to be understood in its social context. Learning processes are performed which illuminate the interrelations of violence with certain ideological patterns like ethnic nationalism, social Darwinism, authoritarianism and patriarchal dominance behaviour.

Secondly, an active alliance is necessary and praiseworthy. Experience has shown that when anti-fascist groups participate in local alliances against the right, they do not give up their independent positions and strategic approaches. Indeed, working in an alliance gives them the chance to encounter other arguments and strategies. Some alliances, however, serve as "token" or "alibi" events for the city government and political parties.

Thirdly, local alliances against the right can force the city government, political parties and the police to stop denying or playing down the problem of right-wing extremism. This necessitates criticizing discourses on right-wing extremism that relativize or deny the issue. Discussing extreme-right and racist attacks as marginal problems – as in the contexts of right or left-wing-extremism, youth violence, marginal groups, lone offenders, or perpetrators as losers in the struggle for modernization – hinders people from really dealing with the social causes and thereby prevents them from gaining a deeper understanding of the problem.

Fourthly, by giving victims support and strengthening alliances against ostracism, we can promote the breakdown of solidarity with the perpetrators and their environment. It is not understanding for the perpetrators that is needed, but rather a withdrawal of all respect for them. They must be made to understand through social disadvantages that racist violence can have no place in a society that claims to be democratic.

Out of: "Was tun gegen rechts", edited by Jens Mecklenburg, Elefant Press Berlin 1999. Reworked by Claudia Luzar (5.9.2002)

[D-A-S-H Dossier #3 "Jugendarbeit gegen Rassismus"](http://www.D-A-S-H.org/Dossier/Dossier3.html) <<http://www.D-A-S-H.org/Dossier/Dossier3.html>>

5. The Victim Counseling Center ABAD – A case study of daily racist life in Thuringia

by Friedrich C. Burschel and Rahel Krückels (project members)

"It's still not clear whose fault it was! Jean (name changed by the editor) really provokes people sometimes," suggests the social worker at the shared refugee housing facility. She's talking about an African resident in the facility, where she's found a job through a work subsidy program.

She doesn't mean any harm by it, but you still want to scream that she shouldn't say these things. Jean was the target of a physical attack by neo-Nazis. A drunken right-wing extremist with a beer bottle and a knife went after the young black man, calling him a "fucking nigger" and threatening him. "What do you want? Do you have a problem with me?" responded Jean, who didn't ignore his attacker, though he did dodge his well-directed knife attacks. The attacker was cheered on by two companions, who called in reinforcements with their mobile phones. A short time later, 10 more right-wing extremists joined them. You can only imagine what would have happened if a brave German couple hadn't stepped in, giving cover to Jean and allowing him to escape. There were enough witnesses as the attack happened in broad daylight. It was late afternoon and Jean had just made a quick stop at the store, Rewe-Markt, not far away from a shopping center.

Jean was surprised only by the suddenness of the Nazi attack, not by the attack itself. As a politically active young man, he's always aware that this kind of situation could develop. With unease, he describes day-to-day life in the town where he is forced to live. For him, every trip to town means getting insulted and sworn at by "normal" townspeople: "Hey nigger, go back to Africa – we don't need your kind around here" or "Out with foreigners – you're taking our jobs away." It's not only black Africans who are permanently confronted by racist taunts like these, but all people here who are perceived to be "non-Germans". He doesn't react any more to this lack of respect, to these non-physical attacks.

None of the attackees would think of filing complaints against the people who insult them. A suggestion of this kind would presumably only be greeted with bitter laughter. "With this," says Jean in French, pointing to his dark skin, "you don't have any chance with the police." Jean is exposed to the police's usual humiliating treatment even after the attack – it doesn't matter that he's the victim. Someone called the police at some point during the attack. When they arrived on the scene and arrested the offenders, Jean had already disappeared, headed for the refugee facility. But because a black man in this town could only have come from the shelter, they "got" him almost immediately. Without knocking, the police officers barged into his dingy 15 square meter room that he shares with one of his countrymen. Showing him no manners or common decency, they barked that he should "kindly" accompany them to the witness examination. Jean hardly notices their disrespect now; he is used to being treated this badly by the police of his "host country". Dark-skinned people are also constantly controlled and exposed to ID checks, which are officially justified by the [introduction of the Residenzpflicht](http://www.D-A-S-H.org/Dossier/Dossier1.html) (residency restrictions). <http://www.D-A-S-H.org/Dossier/Dossier1.html>.

People who apply for asylum in Germany must often live in unspeakable conditions in shared housing for asylum seekers. These accommodations are often located on the city outskirts or in remote areas, and what's more, the people living in these places are only free to move about in the county to which they have been assigned. They have no control over the choice of county. "That's the amount of room that a dog is normally entitled to in Germany," cries Jean desperately, referring to his tiny room. When he talks about his situation in the asylum seekers' shelter, where he's lived for over 3 years, his voice sounds more desperate than when we talk about neo-Nazi attacks.

The victim counselors can only take note of this. The ABAD worker only comes after he has heard about the "Nazi attack" in a short report on the radio (Radio Antenne, Thuringia). The attacks briefly focus public attention on the victims of extreme-right violence and racist discrimination, who otherwise live in state of anonymity, completely ignored by society. Often a short report in the media is the only indication that crimes have a far-right background. 5 full-time employees and several volunteers work at ABAD (Anlaufstelle für Betroffene rechtsextremer und rassistischer Angriffe, or Center for Those Affected by Extreme-Right and Racist Attacks), counseling victims in their offices in Gera, in eastern Thuringia, and in Erfurt, the state capital. The antiracist project deals with the ways in which asylum seekers in Germany are treated, housed, incapacitated, deprived, criminalized and robbed of their fundamental civil and human rights. In everyday life, however, the reality of refugees' and migrants' lives only plays a secondary role: ABAD and other refugee and victim counseling centers would be happy if they could handle all the "cases" of open racism, physical attacks and verbal discrimination. It's all too seldom, though, that these occurrences are reported in the newspaper or on the radio and these are often the only clues that the counselors have to go on.

The center's counseling is primarily limited to the victims of numerous extreme-right attacks. Often simple counseling of the neo-Nazi victims, who are usually under shock, afraid, and/or resigned and angry, turns into the bitterly necessary work of freeing them from isolation, and helping them to rediscover their own resources and develop their own unique possibilities for action.

One possibility for action may be to bring an auxiliary charge (or so-called incidental action) against the assailant. This should be done together with a lawyer and allows the victim to act not only as a witness in the courtroom, but to become actively involved in the trial with petitions and testimonies of her or his own. Without an incidental action, the perpetrator's extreme-right background is often completely ignored in court. Indeed, the victim is not infrequently accused of complicity, which in view of her or his day-to-day life, adds insult to injury. Considering the kind of person Jean is – not a passive victim, but a man who defends himself and doesn't run away – the attempt will surely be made. Jean was not only politically active in his country of origin, Togo, where he got into difficulties and as a result is not permitted to return. In Germany, too, he maintains contact with the activists of one of the few self-organized refugee associations, "The Voice", which is located in another Thuringian city, Jena. Having consciously dealt with his situation as a black asylum-seeker in Germany may have saved Jean from the trauma of a life-threatening attack: he was not as surprised as so many of the neo-Nazi victims are.

ABAD counsels and supports victims in questions of psychotherapeutic treatment and incidental actions, in filing compensation and redistribution claims, and in helping with trial costs. Sometimes it's important to just listen, not to question what has happened, but to support the victim's point of view.

Public relations work is another of the responsibilities of the young project, which is sponsored by the Refugee Council in Thuringia. This means not only publicizing individual cases or trials, but also increasing awareness of the humiliating system in which asylum seekers live.

In addition to asylum seekers, ABAD's "clientele" includes people perceived to be non-German and other foreigners, all potential or actual victims of racism, right-wing extremism and anti-Semitism. They are all frequently targets of Nazi attacks and also of discrimination in "normal" society. The physically disabled, people of Jewish persuasion, the homeless, the socially weak, non-right youth, punks, and gays and lesbians are also frequently affected. ABAD also aims to help leftist and alternative youth clubs and meeting places organize themselves, and to support them in their demands for self-determination and emancipative possibilities for development.

An example from southern Thuringia: in the spring of this year, ABAD counseled a young German man who had been attacked by Nazis in Suhl. After the attack, and in cooperation with ABAD, he organized a group of local people who arranged a demonstration which received wide support. The event was supported by, among others, Stefan Hocke, a member of an Olympic team who won in Salt Lake City, the writer Landolf Scherzer and the SPD's vice party whip, Ines Gleicke. The demonstration, which took place on May 26, was also (or only?) attended by 250 people, most of them young.

Another example illustrating a further aspect of ABAD's work... In eastern Thuringia, ABAD is cooperating with a local asylum group on a campaign against the living conditions of the circa 300 asylum seekers in the refugee residence, Markersdorf, in the county of Greiz. This county's borders encircle the city, Gera, almost like a wrench. Markersdorf is located directly on Gera's city limits, but is about 40 kilometers away from the county town. Nevertheless, the refugees may not enter Gera. The people forced to live in barracks-like conditions in Markersdorf are almost robbed of their right to self-expression: there is no public telephone on the residency grounds, and the closest telephone booth is in the city of Gera, about 500 meters away. The trip there, along a highway between speeding cars and guard barriers, is life-threatening. The "non-German"-looking people become the targets of Nazis, who attack them, and of passing motorists, who throw trash out their windows at them and insult them. To top it all off, the asylum seekers can be fined by the police, who lie in wait for them in Weissig, where the telephone booth is located. They can be forced to pay around 100 euros for violating residency laws, a hard task with a monthly cash allowance of 41 euros.

In short: racist daily life in Thuringia, Germany. Various people's various types of racism intertwine to build a hostile system of humiliation and disenfranchisement. A case for ABAD!

6. "And for special cases there is a hardship provision in the new immigration law."

D-A-S-H interview with Bundestag President, Wolfgang Thierse

Wolfgang Thierse (SPD) has long been calling for more protection for the victims of extreme-right violence. He has set a unique tone in his capacity as Bundestag President with his suggestion to "grant permanent residency rights to foreigners who have been attacked by right-wing extremists." Regarding the social analysis of the causes of right-wing extremism, he remarked in a Bundestag debate "that it is no longer a case of a marginal phenomenon, but a danger infecting the very heart of democratic society. Xenophobic attitudes have become almost the norm for a quite significant number of people." In an interview with D-A-S-H, Wolfgang Thierse speaks of his commitment to the residency rights issue and discusses what must be achieved in politics and society in order for these rights to be realized.

The umbrella association of the victim counseling centers, agOra, sees the creation of residency rights for the victims of racist violence primarily as a political signal which should be understood as a reaction to the attacks and the climate of racial prejudice which promotes them. How would you explain today your corresponding demand of May 5, 2001 (in the newspaper, "Magdeburger Volksstimme")?

Wolfgang Thierse: What outraged me most of all at the time was that in the case of a fatal victim of a Nazi hunt in Guben, the trauma suffered as a result of extreme-right violence was invoked as a reason for the victim's planned deportation. That's cynical and plays into the hands of the extremists. I am therefore pleased that it didn't come to deportation in the end.

How is your point of view and your commitment to this issue reflected in your political action?

From early on I was in favour of regulating immigration in a sensible way – both as regards controlling and limiting immigration as well as increasing efforts to integrate the immigrants. At the same time, as you know, I support and encourage civic action against all forms of right-wing extremism and xenophobia.

Did you also make these demands when the immigration law was being revised?

The immigration law completely changes the previous so-called "foreigner policy". It includes political persecution motivated by racism and also non-state persecution which is expressly mentioned for the first time in this law. Also opportunities for protecting the victims are clearly improved.

Why couldn't a corresponding article be written into the immigration law?

I am confident that the immigration law accommodates the concern of protecting victims of racist violence without needing an explicit provision. And for special cases there is a hardship provision.

Does the provision on hardship cases stipulated in the law offer an adequate solution?

I very much hope so, as the new provision on hardship cases can be implemented in view of urgent humanitarian or personal considerations, making it theoretically possible for victims of racist violence to avail themselves of it. The concrete implementation of this provision now rests in the hands of the individual federal states.

How realistic in your estimation is the future realization of the demand for residency rights for victims of racist violence?

In view of the fundamental changes which have been set in motion by the immigration law, I don't expect that those in need of treatment, let alone chronically ill victims of violence, will be deported in the future without difficulty.

What must be done in this respect in politics and society?

If civic action groups, churches, and counseling centers continue their efforts to ensure that in such cases the full scope of legal interpretation is exploited to the attack victim's advantage, this will be very helpful in creating a system which is humane in its practice.

The work of the victim counseling centers has been made possible as a direct result of Civitas sponsorship. To what extent do you believe that the continuation of such a program against right-wing extremism is dependent on the outcome of the Bundestag elections?

I'm careful on that one. I can only recall that one of the first decisions in Saxony-Anhalt after the change in government was the cessation of public funding for the most important initiatives against right-wing extremism in that federal state.

Can anti-racist initiatives and projects against the extreme right continue to count on your support?

Yes.

7. Regional Victim Counseling Projects

AMAL – Counseling center for victims of extreme-right violence in Saxony

The office in Wurzen is one of three AMAL counseling centers for people affected by extreme-right violence in Saxony. The people working in the three offices, which are supported by the *Netzwerk für Demokratische Kultur* (Network for Democratic Culture) in Wurzen, see themselves as the AMAL Saxony Team.

The counseling center is currently working on a variety of cases in the outskirts of Wurzen as well as in other areas of Saxony. On the day of the final match of the soccer World Cup, for example, at least 5 non-Germans fell victim to extreme-right thugs in Chemnitz.

Supporting volunteers and attracting new ones is seen to be especially important – it was thanks to them that a series of training workshops could be carried out in Glauchau. Other cities are expected to hold similar workshops now as well. There are plans for a support network in the future, as well as the establishment of a legally recognized association that can handle funding issues. The main focus of their work, however, remains the intensive counseling of victims.

AMAL Saxony

Dresden Office:

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mailto: amal.dresden@ndk-wurzen.de

Wurzen Office:

Tel. 03425-852710

mailto: amal.wurzen@ndk-wurzen.de

Görlitz Office:

Tel. 03581-878583 und 0170-3180755

mailto: amal.goerlitz@ndk-wurzen.de

ReachOut - Counseling and training against right-wing extremism and racism in Berlin

ReachOut wants to help create social conditions in which all people are guaranteed the same chances for access to social resources. ReachOut is directed towards people who are affected by extreme-right, racist and anti-Semitic attacks and threats. In Berlin, this includes primarily refugees and migrants, but African-Germans, Jews, non-right youths (hip-hoppers, skaters, punks, etc.), lesbians and gays, the socially disadvantaged (homeless, etc.) and people with disabilities are also attacked, threatened and taunted.

The counseling at ReachOut is partisan, free, voluntary, confidential, based on trust, commensurate with the needs of the those seeking help, and, if desired, anonymous. The work of the center focuses on supporting the counselees and helping them to win back their self-determination after the attack and to strengthen their feeling of self-worth. On the initiative of ReachOut members, and with their participation, a project of men and women immigrants was developed with the aim of promoting the self-organization and self-representation of potential victims of attack.

ReachOut

Tel. 030 - 695 68 339

Fax 030 - 695 68 346

mailto: info@reachoutberlin.de

<www.reachoutberlin.de>

ABAD – Center for Those Affected by Extreme-Right and Racist Attacks and Discrimination in Thuringia

ABAD supports victims of extreme-right violence by providing advice on possibilities for legal intervention. They help in looking for witnesses, provide support on visits to government offices and accompany attack victims in court proceedings. They also arrange psychotherapy if it is necessary as a result of the attack.

ABAD documents racist discrimination and informs the public from the perspective of those affected. The counseling center also provides practical advice on how to deal with threats.

ABAD supports local initiatives which take up the cause of the victims of racist and extreme-right attacks and discrimination, and which encourage or practice victims' self-organization. Their aim is the country-wide networking of such initiatives.

ABAD

Hotline for victims of extreme-right violence: 0800-2172723

Erfurt Office:
Tel.: 0361-21727-23
Fax: 0361-21727-27
mailto: abad-ef@gmx.de

Gera Office:
Tel.: 0365-5518612
mailto: abad-gera@t-online.de

<www.abad-th.de>

Opferperspektive - Victim Perspective Counseling for victims of extreme-right violence in Brandenburg

There are now 6 full-time employees in the association, "Opferperspektive e.V." (Victim Perspective). Although they had begun with the noble goal of dividing their work equally – as regards both the area of work and the time spent on it – soon, everyone had developed their own special areas of interest and responsibility. It was decided that, as far as possible, everyone should be active in the central area of victim counseling, but that fields like public relations, finance and youth and adult training should be assigned to individual employees, depending on their areas of interest. The association's work is not limited to supporting individual victims. Discussing concrete measures, and creating safe public spaces together with as many people as possible, is more significant.

There is no generally recognized training for victim counselors – it is much more important for the association that their employees are familiar with the issues of right-wing extremism and racism, and that they are socially/politically engaged and ready to act on their convictions. "Victim Perspective" offers politically interested young people the opportunity to complete an internship in the counseling center. Ideally, the intern would then be given a limited work contract, for example to work on a counseling brochure.

The association joined the organization, agOra (The Working Committee for the Counseling Project for Victims of Racist, Extreme-Right and Anti-Semitic Violence), because agOra too works on the principle, "alone we're weak, but together we're strong." Victim Perspective is convinced that their work will find greater resonance in the umbrella organization, whose campaign, "Residency Rights for Victims of Extreme-Right Violence", they very much welcome. They know from their practical experience that refugees are often attacked and beaten up, and that in addition to dealing with the effects of the attack, they are very afraid of being deported.

Opferperspektive e.V.
Lindenstr. 47
14467 Potsdam
Tel. 0171 - 19 35 669
Fax 01212 - 5 - 11559889
<info@opferperspektive.de>
<http://www.opferperspektive.de>

Address list of all known victim counseling centers

Brandenburg

Opferperspektive e.V. – Victim Perspective
Lindenstr. 47
14467 Potsdam
Tel. 0171 - 19 35 669
Fax 01212 - 5 - 11559889
<info@opferperspektive.de>

Anlaufstelle für Opfer rechtsextremer Gewalt – Center for victims of extreme-right violence
Parzellenstraße 79
03046 Cottbus
Tel. 0172 - 75 85 772
Fax 0721 - 151 221 837
mailto: AfOrG@gmx.net

Kontakt- und Beratungsstelle für Opfer rechter Gewalt – Contact and counseling center for victims of extreme-right violence
Breitscheidstr. 41
16321 Bernau
Tel./ Fax: 03338 - 459 407
03338 - 754 667 (AB)
mailto: kontaktstelle@bernau.net
<http://www.dosto.de/op/index.htm>

Beratungsgruppe für Opfer rechtsextremer Gewalt – Counseling group for victims of extreme-right violence

Postfach 1126
15331 Strausberg
Tel. 0173 - 634 36 04
mailto: BORG-SRB@gmx.net

Beratungsstelle für Opfer rechtsextremer Gewalt – Counseling center for victims of extreme-right violence

Berliner Str. 24
15230 Frankfurt (Oder)
Mondays from 9:00 to 12:00
Tel.: 0335 - 665 99 94,
0335 - 280 12 19 und 0179 - 12 65 680
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B e r l i n

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Opferberatung der RAA Leipzig – Victim counseling, RAA Leipzig

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S a x o n y - A n h a l t

Miteinander e.V. - Together

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mailto: opferberatung.md@miteinander-ev.de
<<http://www.miteinander-ev.de>>
<<http://mobile-opferberatung.de/>>

Halle Office: Tel.: 0170-2948413
Halberstadt Office: Tel.: 0170-2948352
Gardelegen Office: Tel.: 0170-2904112

Mobile Opferberatung Süd – Mobile Victim Counseling South

Tel.: 01 70/ 2 94 84 13
mailto: opferberatung.sued@miteinander-ev.de

c/o Miteinander e.V.
Judenstr. 31
06667 Weißenfels
Tel.: 0 34 43/ 33 38 62
Fax: 0 34 43/ 23 92 51

c/o Blickpunkt Opfer Sachsen-Anhalt e.V.
Reilstr. 78
06114 Halle

Tel.: 03 45/ 5 48 38 51

Mobile Opferberatung Nord - Mobile Victim Counseling North

Tel.: 01 70/ 2 90 41 12

mailto: opferberatung.nord@miteinander-ev.de

c/o Miteinander e.V.

Bahnhofstr. 30

39638 Gardelegen

Tel.: 03907/ 77 80 38

Fax: 03907/ 71 56 79

Mobile Opferberatung Mitte - Mobile Victim Counseling Mitte

Tel.: 0170/ 2 94 83 52

mailto: opferberatung.mitte@miteinander-ev.de

Tel.: 0170-2 92 53 61

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c/o Miteinander e.V.

Hegelstr. 35

39104 Magdeburg

Tel.: 03 91/5 44 67 10

Fax: 03 91/5 44 67 11

c/o Arbeitersamariterbund (ASB) Halberstadt

Voigtei 38

38820 Halberstadt

Beratungsstelle für Opfer rechter Gewalt Dessau – Counseling center for victims of extreme-right violence in Dessau

Tel.: 0340-6612395

mailto: antidiskriminierg.buero.dessau@t-online.de

M e c k l e n b u r g - W e s t e r n P o m e r a n i a

LOBBI e.V.

Rostock Office: Tel. 0381-2009377

Wismar Office: Tel. 03841-334353

mailto: lobbi-mv@gmx.de

<www.lobbi-mv.de>

T h u r i n g i a

ABAB - Anlaufstelle für Betroffene von rechtsextremen und rassistischen Angriffen und Diskriminierungen (Center for those affected by extreme-right and racist attacks and discrimination)

Erfurt Office:

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8. Links

B a c k g r o u n d i n f o r m a t i o n

List of Victims

<http://www.linkeseite.de/Morgengrauen/nr83.htm#10>

All murder victims of extreme-right and racist attacks since reunification in 1990.

Documentation and Information Center for Racism Research

<http://www.dir-info.de>

The Dokumentations- und Informationszentrum für Rassismusforschung D.I.R. e.V. (Documentation and Information Center for Racism Research), online at www.dir-info.de, sees itself as a center of information and exchange for people, groups and projects that work against racism, xenophobia and right-wing extremism. D.I.R. provides daily updated news and information, documents, topic pages and statistics on its newly redesigned website, which also includes an extensive link list that directs users to current projects, and documents university and college-level activities. Within the framework of the Antiracist Network, D.I.R. concentrates on the self-representations of groups, initiatives and projects and on information regarding the topics of university and college research and racism. It's also possible to order D.I.R. material from the website.

Exhibition Topography of Terror / Anschläge am Bauzaun

<http://www.topographie.de/>

<http://www.anschlaege.de/rechtszaun/zaunindex.html>

This exhibition on right-wing extremism in Germany since 1990 was developed as part of a semester project called "Attacks against the Right?" for the Communications and Design Department of the Berlin art school, Kunsthochschule Berlin Weißensee. As a critical reaction to the call for entries in the poster competition, "Anschläge gegen Rechts" (Attacks against the Right), which was sponsored by the German section of the Internationalen Grafikdesigner Verbandes AGI (International Graphic Designer Association) in autumn of 2000, we would like to discuss the problem of right-wing extremism at a deeper level and thereby also address the way it could be visually represented and dealt with in the media.

Supporting projects

Amadeu Antonio Foundation

<http://www.amadeu-antonio-stiftung.de>

The Amadeu Antonio Stiftung (Foundation) - Initiatives for Civil Society and Democratic Culture - supports projects with teachers, policewomen and men, as well as victims of racist violence; establishes contacts with local networks; and carries out events of its own. The foundation's website provides information about current areas of work and introduces a selection of projects they have supported.

TOGETHER. Network for Democracy and World Openness in Saxony-Anhalt

<http://www.miteinander-ev.de>

The grassroots association, MITEINANDER. Netzwerk für Demokratie und Weltoffenheit in Sachsen-Anhalt e.V. (TOGETHER. Network for Democracy and World Openness in Saxony-Anhalt), works at a local level for the development of civil society values and against right-wing extremism and xenophobia. The association's website lists contact persons and provides information on activities in regional centers.

Pro Asyl

<http://www.proasyl.de/>

Pro Asyl is a human rights organization that is particularly committed to refugee issues: legal position, advice, documentation

Aktion Noteingang

<http://www.djb-ev.de/noteingang>

The campaign, Noteingang (Emergency Entrance) of the Demokratischen Jugendforums Brandenburg e.V. (DJB or Democratic Youth Forum of Brandenburg) provides concrete protection and information programs against racist attacks. They speak to store and restaurant owners, branch managers, managers of social facilities and other public institutions, and distribute stickers which show people who are being persecuted that this is a place where they will find immediate protection in case of danger. Rounding off the site is a list of contact addresses and tips on how to behave in situations of acute danger. They also have a virtual survey which is intended to scientifically analyze the attitudes of the people (store owners, etc.) contacted.

Help for victims in Switzerland

<http://www.unine.ch/fsm/publicat/recherche/pdf/22.pdf>

Help for victims of racist discrimination – an analysis of what's available in Switzerland.

Activities of the German federal government

Aktiv gegen Rechts: New regulations on registering victims of extreme-right violence

<http://www.aktiv-gegen-rechts.de/newsletter/nl010331.htm>

"Focusing on more victims. The Ministers of the Interior want to register racist offenses more precisely in the future – as politically motivated crime."

On the definition of "politically motivated crime"

<http://www.auswaertiges->

[amt.de/www/de/aussepolitik/menschenrechte/mr_inhalte_ziele/mrb6/teil_a/rassismus/massnahmen_in_d.html](http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/www/de/aussepolitik/menschenrechte/mr_inhalte_ziele/mrb6/teil_a/rassismus/massnahmen_in_d.html)

The Foreign Office – Measures for fighting racism and intolerance in Germany

"The positive aspects of the internet should be used too: The D-A-S-H project is developing a Europe-wide campaign to encourage young people and youth groups to form an alliance to act against intolerance and discrimination and to stand up for tolerance and diversity."

Historical Bundestags Proposal

<http://dip.bundestag.de/btd/14/054/1405456.pdf>

6.3.2001 Proposal of all parliamentary parties with the exception of the CDU/CSU against right-wing extremism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism and violence. With explicit and extensive calls for victim protection.

German federal government's strategies for fighting right-wing extremism

http://www.bmi.bund.de/Annex/de_22125/Download.pdf

Report on the federal government's current and planned measures and activities against right-wing extremism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, and violence, in accordance with Ziff. 21 of the German Bundestag Resolution of 30 March 2001.
(Drs. 14/5456).

Program against right-wing extremism is being threatened with dissolution

http://www.berlinonline.de/wissen/berliner_zeitung/archiv/2002/0812/politik/0038/index.html?keywords=thierse%20civitas&ok=OK%21&match=strict&author=&ressort=&von=12.8.2002&bis=&mark=thierse%20civitas
Berliner Zeitung, dated 12.8.2002: Further funding of Civitas depends on election results / Precautionary plans for cancellation of contracts with employees

Red/Green government fudged statistics, decreasing number of victims

<http://www.wsws.org/de/2000/sep2000/list-s19.shtml>

The newspapers, *Frankfurter Rundschau* and the Berlin *Tagesspiegel*, publish a list of the names of all the victims of extreme-right violence since German reunification.

M e d i a e c h o

Panorama TV show "The Silenced Dead"

<http://www.ndrtv.de/panorama/archiv/20000824.html#a4>

Panorama TV show "Die verschwiegenen Toten" – contradictory federal and state statistics concerning victims of extreme-right violence.

All Tagesspiegel newspaper articles on right-wing extremism

<http://www.tagesspiegel.de/pubs/aktuell/pageviewer.asp?TextID=333>

The whole spectrum of the issues of racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Germany.

Media responsibility concerning the issue of xenophobia

http://www.drehscheibe.org/leitfaden_medienverantwortung.html

"The media (re)produce the prejudicial picture that the majority of Germans have of foreigners: crime, drug dealers and the Mafia; strange concepts of honour and Islamic terror; waiting in line for welfare; expensive support from the social system for every conceivable problem. Then there are the multicultural human interest pieces that the same media produce to assuage their guilty conscience and that produce almost the same fatal effects in the German reader."

The danger of a further escalation of violence – counteraction is possible.

<http://www.uni-marburg.de/zv/news/archiv/presse00/02-08-2000.html>

"Violence against minorities in Germany is a sad issue. The media is full of reports of abuse and attacks against minorities – murders are no longer rare occurrences. The situation is no longer acceptable. Massive countermeasures should have been taken long ago. Societal "aberrations", like increases in xenophobic violence and the acceptance of it, are tending to be progressively escalating processes. Time is running out."