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Ausländerfrei!*The Hoyerswerda Pogrom, 1991*

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The main force driving German politics today is immigration and the resulting large foreign-born and native-born population of immigrant origin. With the flourishing of the nativist-populist *Alternativ für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany, AfD), the groveling to it, last year, of the venerable *Christlich Demokratische Union* (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) and the shambolic, bumbling start to Friedrich Merz's CDU chancellorship, Germany has entered into a new political era—one in which extreme right-wing views become normal, at least so far as immigration is concerned. At this writing, the German government is considering banning the AfD, but this step is debatable from the standpoint of democratic governance and might even make the problem of foreigner hatred worse.

With this in mind, it is an opportune time to revisit what the French call the *banalisation* of anti-foreigner sentiment. This commentary describes the event that brought Germany's inchoate *völkisch* rage, more than a taste of which the United States is now experiencing, out of the shadows and into the daylight—the Hoyerswerda pogrom of September 17–23, 1991.¹

The Hoyerswerda episode remains little known, displaced in collective memory by the August 1992 event that sent German extreme right-wing violence up the international pop charts: the anti-asylum seeker riot in Rostock, a city in the state of Mecklenburg-Pomerania, which involved several hundred hardcore perpetrators, with perhaps three thousand townspeople abetting. And by the steady dribble of more individualized and narrowly targeted, but deadlier, events. In November 1992 in Mölln, Schleswig-Holstein, three Turks were killed and nine injured when their houses were firebombed. In May 1993

1 For the sources on which my account is based, see the appendix. It is debatable whether the Hoyerswerda episode was a *pogrom*—a term commonly used to describe the massacre of Jews—or a mere riot. My view is that the violent expulsion, by a majority mob, of a national, religious, ethnic, or sexual minority qualifies as a pogrom. The Russian etymology of the term (meaning to “destroy by violence”) also supports this expansive view. Perhaps settling the matter, the event was interchangeably called a riot and a pogrom in the German press.

in Solingen, North Rhine-Westphalia, five Turks were killed and fourteen injured. In recent memory, there is the October 2019 synagogue shooting in Halle, Saxony-Anhalt, which resulted in two dead and several injured, and the murder, a few months earlier in June 2019, of Angela Merkel's *Willkommen* asylum policy defender, the CDU politician Walter Lübke, outside his home near Kassel, in Hesse. The latest (2023) annual report of the Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz (Office for Protection of the Constitution) estimates 1,148 criminal offences committed in that year by right-wing extremists, including four attempted murders and 1,016 instances of bodily harm.² This is to miss the scores of assaults, even beatings, that do not make it into the official statistics. For them, you would have to scour the local press and Antifa websites. Above all, the Hoyerswerda pogrom has been displaced in German memory by the Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund (NSU) fiasco, in which a trio of just-better-than-stoners barely out of their teens set out on a murderous rampage designed to bring down the German state and gave that state a good run for its money.³

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Hoyerswerda (“HoyWoy” to the locals) lies in German coal country—the Black Triangle, an environmental disaster zone cutting through East Saxony, Poland, and what we on the winning side of the Cold War game used to affectionately call Czecho. In 1955, ground was broken at Hoyerswerda for the largest industrial project destined ever to be constructed in the communist German Democratic Republic (Deutsche Demokratische Republik, DDR), the Schwarze Pumpe coal gasification plant, plus a briquette manufactory, both fed by the neighboring open-pit lignite mine. Advertisements were posted throughout the DDR to attract migrants to the new workers’ paradise. A town was built from scratch

2 See the *Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023* (Berlin: Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat, 2024), https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/SharedDocs/publikationen/DE/verfassungsschutzberichte/2024-06-18-verfassungsschutzbericht-2023-startseitenmodul.pdf?__blob=publicationFile&cv=11.

3 Between January 1998, when they went underground after being tipped off about a botched police raid, and November 2011, when two members committed suicide after a failed bank robbery and the third surrendered to the police, the NSU murdered ten persons of immigrant background and one German policewoman, gravely wounded a German policeman with a bullet to the head, carried out a nail-bomb attack that maimed dozens on a Turkish shopping street in Cologne, as well as one in a Nuremberg café that shredded a young Turkish woman’s face, and committed fifteen daylight robberies—reckoned to amount to some EUR 615,000—to cover the rent, groceries, beer, and summer holidays on the North Sea. The incompetence of the federal and state-level security forces, both cops and spooks, has become legendary. Rumors of complicity abound, and the chummy relationship between intelligence services, their protected informers, and the NSU terrorists was so tangled that no investigative, let alone prosecutorial, mind will ever sort it out. As one pithy saying has it, “The German state fought the Rote Armee Fraktion [Red Army Faction, popularly known as the Baader-Meinhof Gang]. It financed the NSU.” Racism played a role, as well, with the police long blaming the murders on internecine Turkish gang wars. Following a five-year trial of the survivor and a few hangers-on that satisfied no one, multiple parliamentary inquiries, and an official apology to the German nation by Chancellor Angela Merkel, the NSU scandal poisons German politics to this day.

across the river from the existing old one, eventually housing some 60,000 inhabitants and dwarfing the original settlement of 7,000 or so. Row on row of *Plattenbau*—the cheap, bolted-together prefab concrete-block rectangular buildings inspired by Le Corbusier that were to DDR housing what the Trabant was to family transport—sprang up to house the miners and plant workers and their families. The new neighborhoods were named—here is DDR imagination for you—Housing Complex I through Housing Complex X.

DDR imagination was to architectural charm as the DDR workforce to labor productivity. And not only had many young men perished in the war, but the East hemorrhaged youth to the West throughout the 1950s until the Berlin exit loophole was closed by the Wall in 1961. One response to the labor shortage was the institution of bilateral worker visa programs with comradely states. It started with siblings Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, and Romania, but when the supply of European kinfolk dwindled, treaties were negotiated farther afield, with more exotic and darker-complected relatives, such as communist cousins Cuba, Algeria, Vietnam, and Mozambique. This was to be mutually beneficial circular migration, nothing like the capitalist exploitation of Turkish and Italian guest workers in the liberal-democratic Federal Republic of Germany (Bundesrepublik Deutschland, BRD). Imported workers were to receive training in valuable skills, which they could take back to their homes along with the socialist consciousness they had absorbed, imparting both to their benighted countrymen. All for the betterment of the grateful visitors and the elevation of their homelands.

In fact, the policy goal was to use up the contract workers and throw them out before they could become established or, God forbid, seduce local women and start breeding like the American soldiers stationed in the BRD. Extensions to the basic five-year contract were rarely granted and workers were subject to immediate dismissal and expulsion for failure to observe socialist work standards (“Fight American imperialism! Show up for work on time!” urged one poster). There was no training in valuable skills. Lacking in German and with rudimentary education, the foreign hired help was engaged in menial, repetitive tasks. The most *Lumpen* (literally “ragged,” figuratively “riffraff”) of the *Lumpenproletariat*.

Population has memory, and the loss of young workers due to the war and emigration in the 1950s, together with rock-bottom fertility rates despite generous family and woman-friendly policies, began to pinch hard in the 1980s. The recruitment of foreign contract workers, in the case of Hoyerswerda mostly from Mozambique and Vietnam, accelerated *pari passu* with this demographic decline. They were exclusively male and lived in a *Plattenbau* in Albert-Schweitzer-Strasse. It was a dormitory existence, housed two and four to a room, segregated by race, all goings and comings controlled at the entrance. Bussed to work with the shift bus, bussed back after.

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The DDR collapsed and early chants of *Wir sind das Volk* (We are the people) gave way to *Wir sind ein Volk* (We are one people). Reunification was hastily cobbled together and took official effect on October 3, 1990. Economic and monetary integration had taken place on July 1. In the DDR, expectations of a rise to BRD living standards

ran wild in defiance of the fundamental principle of equilibrium that the bottom does not rise to the top; the two meet somewhere in between. There is neoclassical economics (and classic thermodynamics) for you. Just where in between would be decided by those on top; there is political economy for you. As between the BRD and DDR, it was no contest. Initial euphoria waned as it became clear that Hoyerswerda was broke—out of business. BRD real estate agents descended to snap up prize old-town *Altbau* buildings at bargain-basement rates. There was a wave of Mormon missionaries asking if you had a moment, Jehovah's Witnesses asking if you had read the Bible, Scientologists offering you a free personality test. Environmentalists cried havoc about coal. Management consultants arrived to rationalize the Schwarze Pumpe plant. The gasification complex and the mine were privatized and sold off.

Anti-foreigner feeling rose. We are being laid off; why are we giving jobs to foreigners, some black as the ace of spades, others slant-eyed, who cannot speak a word of comprehensible German? Our rents are going up; do they even pay rent? Ugly rumors had always circulated that, before economic reunification, the contract workers were paid in the precious BRD *Deutschmark*, not the worthless DDR *Ostmark* like everyone else.

The jig was up for the foreigners. The contracts of the Mozambicans were due to expire at the end of September 1991, those of most of the Vietnamese in December. All were on reduced hours. The Mozambicans passed their leisure in the summer of 1991 lounging around the public space in front of the Albert-Schweitzer-Strasse dormitory wearing outfits and listening to music whose loudness offended the neighbors in equal degree. The Vietnamese, a mercantile people, and one that had never been as despised as the Africans, were more proactive: they cornered the illegal trade in cigarettes, mostly smuggled from Czecho, in the weekly new-town market at Lausitzer Platz.

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As a teenager in the late DDR or just after, to be a conformist like your parents was to be a *Schleimer*, a toady. If you had any get-up-and-go, you hung with either the punk or the skinhead scene, and which one did not matter so much as the gesture of contempt for the System. Sometimes the two even hung amicably together, distinguishable only by their hairdos and the shoelaces on their boots—white for the skins, red for the punks. The punks listened to The Clash and AC/DC. The skinheads listened to Skrewdriver and Neue Werte.

“Neo-Nazi” is a term of disputable legal, political, and sociological meaning; but it will do until a better one shows up. If you wanted to act out and cause a teenaged commotion in those heady times, then celebrating the Third Reich, flinging Nazi salutes, and so on was a good place to start. And if you were one of that sliver of humanity that enjoys inflicting violence on others at close quarters, hand to hand, even at risk of being injured yourself, then better a skin than a punk. Not to forget: there were no neo-Nazis in the DDR. Party line. Fascism was the outgrowth of capitalism and, in the BRD, it was practically bourgeois, as exemplified by leading

lights of the far-right and neo-Nazi scenes like Michael Kühnen (a former German Air Force officer), Jürgen Rieger (attorney), Gerhardt Frey (real estate tycoon), and Christian Worch (notary's assistant). In the DDR, fascism had been eliminated root and branch; there were only anti-social hooligans and "rowdies." Nothing political about it.

There is, in Germany, a wide margin of appreciation for public drunkenness. The open consumption of beer is, unless you are staggering, vomiting, or near comatose, a sacred right, and the legal age is sixteen. Late in the afternoon of Tuesday, September 17, 1991, a group of skins was hanging out at the Lausitzer Platz market making a civic nuisance of themselves—swilling beer with the odd shot of vodka, bellowing snatches of songs by favorite banned neo-Nazi bands, overturning parked bicycles, mocking the good citizens out for their shopping, and assaulting, with perhaps some mild battery thrown in, the odd punk passerby who came within their orbit. Just lads being lads after a few too many. When the ciggies ran out, they mobbed one of the Vietnamese trading tables and helped themselves.

In the retail cigarette black market, margin is thin. Smuggled inventory, always at risk of being confiscated by the police, is financed at loan-shark rates and precious as a consequence. So, it is not surprising that a scuffle ensued. At 17:20, two police wagons arrived, and amid much shoving and abuse, the police detained seven persons. But more skins had shown up, and the rumor spread that a Vietnamese had stabbed one of their friends' dogs. That was *casus belli* for the skins.

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Discretion is the better part of valor, Falstaff observed in *Henry IV*, part 1. Respecting that principle, the Vietnamese withdrew to shelter in their Albert-Schweitzer-Strasse dormitory. The skinheads followed, picking up camp followers along the way. The crowd shouting threats and racist slogans in front of the *Plattenbau* grew to about forty and started to throw bottles at the windows, behind which the residents cowered. The police showed up at 18:15 and were met with a torrent of abuse. Neighbors gathered to cheer the rioters on. Police from surrounding towns were called at 19:00, and by about 21:00 the sun had fallen, the scene had been controlled, and the crowd disbursed.

But the news had spread, and to judge from what ensued, this was the best after-work and after-school entertainment in Hoyerswerda for months. By 17:00 on Wednesday, September 18, there was a mob of four or five dozen skins and diverse other malcontents in front of the building, and the number of upstanding neighbors gathered in support exceeded one hundred. Stones were thrown and the crowd cheered every time a window was broken, roaring that universal cry of triumph—*Gooo . . . al!* Beleaguered dormitory residents sallied to defend the building, and the seventy police now on the scene, reinforced by a special commando unit from Dresden, struggled to separate the two sides. By 19:30, the crowd outside the building was estimated to be 200 to 250 persons. The usual wet blankets—a

bureaucrat from the local office of the state government (*Landesamt*) of Saxony, another from the office representing foreign workers, and various persons of the cloth representing Christian values—showed up to preach tolerance. But, whereas their message was a cloying mix of the didactic, the chiding, and the cajoling, the message of the mob was straight, no chaser: If you do not get these people out of here, we will do it ourselves.

In public communicative space, it does not get simpler than that. Thus did the theft of a few packs of cigarettes become a pogrom.

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On Thursday the nineteenth, sympathizers arrived on trains and buses from across the region for this impromptu neo-Nazi Woodstock. The crowd of supportive locals had grown further; by 19:45, it was estimated at over five hundred. The first Molotov cocktails were thrown, none penetrating the building but exploding on the terrace in front to loud huzzahs. Petrol was siphoned from parked automobiles and poured into empty beer bottles to make more Mollies. The police tried to contain the access to the scene with roadblocks, but that did not alleviate the situation within the perimeter, where the security forces were now massed shoulder to shoulder with helmets and neck-to-knee riot shields to defend the building. Besieged residents threw missiles—bottles, glasses, chairs, and the like—from the roof. It was midnight before the situation was finally brought under control.

The mighty German state swung into action on Friday the twentieth with the arrival on the scene of a senior official from *Landesamt* Saxony. The police presence had now grown to three hundred. At a lunchtime meeting, crisis management's thinking crystallized around three conclusions: 1) the weekend was coming and, leisure being what leisure is, this was going to get worse before it got better; 2) the citizens were against, not with, the forces of order; so 3) the mob was going to grow bored with attacking the foreigners and turn their attention increasingly to the police.

Conclusion: the *Ausländer* (foreigners) had to go. As a goodwill gesture to the mob, that afternoon the police freed from custody all rioters who had been detained. Buses were brought to Albert-Schweitzer-Strasse and all but about seventy residents whose contracts were still valid for another month were evacuated. The crowd jeered and applauded as they were bused away to Frankfurt or Berlin, where they were clapped on the back, given an "attaboy," and put on the plane back home.

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The German state had surrendered to the mob, a message that was to reverberate across Germany in coming months. But if the authorities thought they had ended the party by removing the punch bowl, they were naive—things were just getting lively. For months, a source of discontent even greater than the foreign contract workers was the novel post-reunification presence in Hoyerswerda of about a thousand asylum seekers from

across the world. Then, as now, Germany was a magnet for the international asylum system's refugees—a country where you were decently housed and provided with a basic stipend while your claim was considered. A few side hustles—odd jobs, petty theft and extortion, loose joints—would generate supernumerary resources to round out the ends of the month. Your case was adjudicated at a measured pace, with plenty of room for judicial review and going to ground if it was rejected (as most were, and are, destined to be). Some 240 asylum seekers were housed on Thomas-Müntzer-Strasse in Housing Complex X.

The next day, the troublemakers from Albert-Schweitzer-Strasse converged on the asylum seekers' dormitory, bringing with them their supporters and attracting a local crowd that grew to an estimated one thousand. This was the Saturday peak that the police had feared. The scene became a family affair: women in housedresses or bathrobes suckled infants; dogs barked and peed at will; men guzzled beer and peed, backs turned, at decent remove. The weather was glorious.

The authorities were, for once, out in front of the mob; they had already decided on Friday that the asylum seekers would have to go the way of the contract workers: "Es besteht einheitliche Auffassung dazu, dass eine endgültige Problemlösung nur durch Ausreise der Ausländer geschaffen werden kann" (The unanimous opinion is that a solution to the problem that will work in the end can only be achieved by the departure of the foreigners). In other words, the only feasible solution was the stupidest one—appeasing the rioters. *Endgültige Problemlösung*, the solution that will work in the end, is a euphemism for the forbidden term *Endlösung* of evil memory: the Nazi "final solution."

However, evacuation raised legal issues because, unlike contract workers, asylum seekers could not, under the foundational non-refoulement principle of the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention, to which Germany is a signatory, just be flown back to their homeland. An asylum seeker's claim must be properly assessed, and with the German asylum mill's commitment to grind fair and fine, its wheels turn slowly.

A frantic search was made for available accommodation in towns neighboring Hoyerswerda. Panicked asylum seekers begged to be relocated in the prosperous West, not the penurious East. But the BRD would not let the ex-DDR off the hook: when you joined the club, was its view, you agreed to take the bitter with the sweet. The federal-level allocation system demanded that the new *Länder* (states) must bear their fair share of the burden, and that burden was more several than joint. The problems that started in Saxony ought to stay in Saxony, ran the Berlin view. Even Gerhard Schröder, then minister-president of Lower Saxony and chancellor-to-be, went on the record that any reallocation of the asylum seekers would be a strictly one-off emergency measure.

The residents of the Thomas-Müntzer-Strasse dormitory were not privy to the high-level discussions between Berlin and *Landesamt* Saxony. But they knew which way the wind blew. Even before the peak of the troubles, those who had access to automobiles or public transportation took off on their own, with preference for Berlin or Hanover, where civil society activists and churches awaited them with "there, there" and pats on

the shoulder. The less resourceful boarded, under police guard, a convoy of buses Sunday morning and were removed under a hail of bottles and stones. One missile shattered a bus window, and a young Vietnamese fell back screaming in pain, streaming blood from a sliver of glass in his eye. *Gooo . . . al!* It was hours before a rendezvous with an ambulance could be arranged to take the injured man to hospital for emergency treatment.

In this convoy of the damned, the voyagers passed under highway bridges festooned with anti-foreigner banners, through towns where residents lined the street to heckle them—they were dumped at abandoned railway stations or factories, any place with a functioning WC, or were registered at existing asylum-seeker facilities that had no room to accommodate them. Many, in fear, refused to disembark the buses. When an old disused army barracks in a small town was rumored to be used to accommodate some of the displaced foreigners, the locals burned it down. Days passed before the disbursed asylum seekers could be properly disposed of.

Back In HoyWoy, there was jubilation. Its people, who apart from some footballers had never really amounted to much, had coined the German *Unwort* (a detestable word, literally an “un-word”) of the year: *Ausländerfrei!*

Appendix: A Selection of Sources

To understand extreme right-wing violence in Germany, the best place to start is with the NSU. The NSU literature does not treat the Hoyerswerda pogrom itself but depicts the social and institutional context in which right-wing extremism has flourished. Its corpus is vast, consisting of books, newspaper and magazine articles, television interviews and documentaries, advocacy and nongovernmental organization (NGO) reports and websites, and federal and state parliamentary inquiries running to thousands of pages. This is not to mention theater pieces, art exhibitions and installations, and so on.

A number of sources deserve note, but hovering above all of these is the four-volume set *Der NSU-Prozess: Das Protokoll* (The NSU trial: The record), published in 2018 by Verlag Antje Kunstmann with the support of the Stiftung Rudolf Augstein. It is a peculiarity of German law, at least from the Anglo-Saxon point of view, that trial transcripts and recordings are not allowed. A team of four, led (to judge by priority in the authors' list) by *Süddeutsche Zeitung* journalist Annette Ramelsberger, followed the case daily throughout its progression over five years, casting their notes into text. The research apparatus is not so much an apparatus in the traditional sense of an index and list of references as it is a multidimensional concordance of biblical proportions. An appendix of legal terms is particularly useful to the non-German lawyer.

An extensive synopsis of the five-year trial, with critical apparatus, has been published by NSU Watch, a left-leaning advocacy and watchdog NGO (<https://www.nsu-watch.info>).

Heimat Schutz (Homeland protection) by Stefan Aust and Dirk Laabs, published in 2014 by Pantheon, is a nine-hundred-plus-page account that can also be considered authoritative. Aust is a former editor of *Der Spiegel* and *Die Welt*; Laabs

is a well-known investigative reporter. The research apparatus is excellent. There is, as well, a gazetteer of the complicated legal and law enforcement landscape of the case. A weakness of the volume is that, not content with telling a story, the authors are on a mission to prove beyond doubt that the NSU was supported, à la Red Army Faction, by a vast web of sympathizers who have never been brought to justice (plausible), and that the German security and intelligence forces were not only incompetent (indubitable) but deliberately botched the investigation (plausible, but speculative). The authors also produced a television documentary, *Der NSU Komplex* (The NSU complex), based on their research (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3miMf0X_0b4&t=762s).

More digestible, but less authoritative, is Tanjev Schultz's *NSU: Der Terror von rechts und das Versagen des Staates* (NSU: Terror from the right and the failure of the state), published in 2018 by Droemer. Schultz, like Aust and Laab, is a journalist (a former editor at *Süddeutsche Zeitung*).

On the academic side, Matthias Quent's *Rassismus, Radikalisierung, Rechtsterrorismus: Wie der NSU entstand und was er über die Gesellschaft verrät* (Racism, radicalization, right-wing terrorism: How the NSU arose and what it reveals about society), published in 2016 by Beltz Juventa, is an analysis of the development of the NSU from the perspective of political sociology, with an emphasis on the internal dynamics of the right-wing scene and of the NSU itself.

What was it like to be young and setting out in life when the Wall came down? Journalist Sabine Rennefanz's *Eisenkinder: Die stille Wut der Wendegeneration* (Children of iron: The silent anger of the reunification generation), published in 2013 by Luchterhand, is good on this. She describes the desperate need for something to believe, which, for her, led to brief attachment to an extreme Christian sect. Quent is also good on this search for meaning, if more pedantic and consequently less readable.

Best on the mood of the time, though, is Sven (Rossi) Rossman, a hardened skinhead responsible for multiple acts of violence, for which he served long prison terms. Interviewed by Stefan Aust and Dirk Laab for their documentary, he describes how the collapse of the Stasi regime meant total freedom to do anything whatsoever, so long as it destroyed the left and anything that remained of its authority. His descriptions of fights, beatings, demonstrations, and so forth are less descriptions of secular events than they are descriptions of rituals being performed.

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A simple Google Scholar search for “Hoyerswerda” or “Hoyerswerda riots” produces little of academic consequence. Absent fieldwork and interviews, this leaves the author largely at the mercy of journalists, but there are constraints. The archiving of local journalism in Germany—say, the *Hoyerswerdaer Wochenblatt* (Hoyerswerda Weekly)—largely postdates the riots. While antifa newsletters and their counterparts on the right were active at the time, these are strictly ephemera.

What this leaves is a limited supply of reports from the German opinion-leading press and, especially as web archiving developed, the retrospective articles that followed on anniversaries of the events.

A surviving relic from contemporary journalism is Matthias Matussek's feature article "Jagdzeit in Sachsen" (Hunting season in Saxony) from *Der Spiegel*, published on September 29, 1991 (<https://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/index-1991-40.html>). Matussek, a highly respected journalist, is (despite *Der Spiegel's* center-left perspective) a recognized Catholic conservative polemicist. The article drips with contempt for the Easterners. As Matussek writes, "In Hoyerswerda hat der häßliche Deutsche sein Coming-out" (In Hoyerswerda, the ugly German has his coming-out [party]).

With that, we are into retrospectives. To mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the riot, *Deutschland Kultur* on September 15, 2016, ran a feature piece by prize-winning journalist Thilo Schmidt entitled "Ausländerjagd im rechtsfreien Raum" (Foreigner hunt in a lawless zone) (<https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/rassistische-ausschreitungen-in-hoyerswerda-100.html>). Schmidt is good on quoting eyewitness memories of the event. An example:

Ich hab damals ne Siebener-Regel aufgestellt. 70 haben am Anfang randaliert. Sieben haben sich dagegen gestellt. Mehr nicht. Und jetzt kommt eigentlich das Schlimme: 700—junge Familien mit Kindern—die haben Beifall geklatscht—jetzt schmeißen sie endlich die Nigger raus. Und 70.000—die haben geschwiegen. (I invented the rule of seven back then. There were 70 rioters at the beginning. Seven people stood up to them. No more. And now comes the worst: 700—young families with children—applauded— they're finally throwing the niggers out. And 70,000—they didn't say a thing.)

Another interviewee spoke to a number of the rioters and reported their surprise that, far from trying to get them to stop, the bystanders encouraged them to keep it up.

Also in 2016, on September 21, there appeared in *Die Zeit* the Tilman Steffen piece "Angst als Antreib" (Fear as a driver) (<https://www.zeit.de/gesellschaft/2016-09/hoyerswerda-neonazis-fluechtlingsunterkunft-vertragsarbeiter-polizei-afd>). A short feature piece, its most interesting point is describing the recollection of a young policeman present at the scene—appalled at what he witnessed yet, at the time of writing, ironically a local AfD official.

Another 2016 retrospective is David Krenz's September 20 piece "Die Tage der Schande" (Days of shame) in *Der Spiegel* (<https://www.spiegel.de/geschichte/hoyerswerda-1991-rassistische-uebergrieffe-in-sachsen-a-1112887.html>). The author was then a photographer, later editor in chief, of the *Hoyerswerdaer Wochenblatt*. He reported on the occasion of a fifteenth anniversary event at the local office of Die Linke, the reconstructed DDR communist party.

Thirtieth-anniversary retrospectives were muted and fewer in number. On September 15, 2021, the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* published “Wenn die Brühe Hochkommt” (When the broth boils over) (<https://www.sueddeutsche.de/projekte/artikel/politik/hoyerswerda-wie-1991-auslaender-gejagt-wurden-e985000/>) by Ulrike Nimz, a journalist with long experience in the East. The piece focuses on two men, one a pastor who was subsequently involved in supporting the immigrant community, the other a pensioned senior police official tasked with containing the riot. On handling the rioters: “Wir waren schlecht ausgerüstet, unorganisiert. Es gab keine Hierarchie in der Befehlsgewalt. . . . [W]ir waren nicht Herr der Lage, Wir waren Zuschauer” (We were badly equipped, unorganized, with no clear chain of command. . . . We were not masters of the scene. We were spectators.) On evacuating foreigners from the city: “Es war für ihren Schutz vielleicht richtig, aber für Fremdenfeinde war es das Signal: Mit Gewalt könnt ihr die Leute vertreiben” (It may have been right for their protection, but for foreigner haters it was a signal: you can drive people away with violence).

The Sächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung (Saxony State Center for Political Training, under the State Ministry for Culture) published, in 2021, “Hoyerswerda 1991 im Kontext: Eine kurze historische Einordnung” (Hoyerswerda 1991 in context: A short historical analysis) (<https://www.slpb.de/blog/hoyerswerda-1991-im-kontext-eine-kurze-historische-einordnung>). The piece delivers a glance into the late 1980s and early 1990s context that gave rise to the Hoyerswerda pogrom. It is, in significant degree, the mea culpa of the government of Saxony for its capitulation to the rioters.

Finally, the Berlin firm Out of Focus Film (<http://www.out-of-focus-film.net>) produced, in 2016–2017, the web documentary *Hoyerswerda 1991*, clips from which may be seen at the film’s interactive website (<https://www.hoyerswerda-1991.de/start.html>). The major contribution of the project is that it is divided into two parts, the first focusing on the events of 1991 and the second on post-1991 Hoyerswerda.