

Federal Consortium of Critical Police Officers

Hamburg Chapter
c/o Thomas Wüppesahl

Press Release

Number 4: On domestic policy in Hamburg since March 2011

Rote Flora, Politics and Police

We Critical Police Officers present herewith our first written position on the militant altercation between state organs and citizens regarding the Rote Flora Social Center, the ESSO high-rises, the so-called 'Lampedusa' refugees and rent prices in Hamburg.

A police action like the one on 21 December 2013 could not have resulted in over 700 persons injured; property damage to numerous buildings in Elbchaussee; a heavily damaged District Office in Eimsbüttel; a damaged Police Union Branch Office in Hamburg (right next to Police Headquarters no less) etc.; and serial civil rights violations by police as well as other extreme acts of violence in the 14 days since; had it been "successful."

This law enforcement disaster (disastrous, it should be mentioned, especially for the State) cannot be taken back simply with pithy words or a series of empty gestures of sympathy and/or solidarity for one or the other of the parties involved. Certainly not for the pompous parading Police, whose union reps (and their friends in uniform) seem so eager, with a melodramatic bearing we could label "Patrolman Diligent" or "Patrolwoman Naive," to play the role of innocent victim.

"Wer die Genesis zur Seite schiebt, kommt zwangsläufig zu falschen Analysen und Bewertungen."

Or: False Premises – False Conclusions

The Hamburg Police is performing like a band of enforcers from the Dark Ages. And politicians in Hamburg are being led around, as if helpless, by the police. Executive and Legislative roles appear to have been reversed.

Having the same root word (polis) seems to have made both forces, politics and police, unsure of how to interpret and understand their roles in a Republic. Seen before the backdrop of the value system enshrined in our constitution—with clearly defined separation of powers—this kind of confusion can never be permitted. But this is precisely what is happening in Hamburg; it is still shaking out, and where we will end up is anybody's guess.

According to Hamburg Police, there were at least three justifications for their repressive course of action against the registered public assembly on 21 December 2013:

1. The demonstrators set out on the announced march too early.
2. the demonstrators committed acts of violence (throwing stones from a railroad bridge near Sternschanze Station), and
3. Because there were violent individuals in the demonstration, the whole demonstration could not be permitted into the city center.

The first two 'justifications' are outright lies and were quickly disproven; they have more or less faded from the discourse.

The third justification is relevant here. Except precisely this justification violates civil rights and the constitution. That's why it had to be padded by the other two ridiculous claims ('they started marching too early,' and 'there was violence against police officers').

One should also be aware that ever since the drama around the Gladbecker hostage crisis in 1988, police 'spokespeople' are precisely that: professional spokespeople. It should also be known that there are innumerable contacts between so-called higher-ups in the police force and journalists, since now media courses are part of a ranking officer's education.

It should be clear, in this context, that justifications 1. and 2. were nothing more than idiot-checks. It seems, regrettably, that there are a lot of idiots around.

We won't be reporting anything new, at least to Hamburgers, when we bring up that the police kettle of June 1986 [known worldwide as the Hamburg Pocket –ed.] was the occasion for the Consortium of Critical Police Officers' founding. That kettle was found to have violated civil rights to such an extent that all of the over 700 demonstrators involved were awarded monetary restitution by the Regional Court and the three police commanders responsible were admonished and fined. It should be noted that these were merely symbolic penalties for over 700 unlawful detentions, coercion, and other offenses. So much for equal protections for all under the law. This phenomenon, of course, reaches far beyond just the city of Hamburg.

What we experienced on 21 December 2013 goes beyond the occasion of our founding—in its dysfunction, unscrupulousness, and scale—by a factor of 3. The overwhelming majority of the marchers were peaceful and were prevented by the police's escalation strategy from practicing their rights to assembly and expression.

How many confidential informants, undercover investigators, plainclothesmen, and paid foreign agents were present?

We demand the disclosure of the numbers of confidential informants, undercover investigators, plainclothes officers (irrespective of which district, ministry or federal authority they represented) and foreign agents, whether officers or citizens, who were assigned to glean information from and/or influence the comportment of the assembly. It was substantial.

Such a disclosure—simply numbers—would not risk any protected private information and would not endanger any government sources, but would provide considerably more transparency.

Parliamentary bodies, especially those of Feierabend-Landtag-Hamburg, and the citizenry could then consider whether they would like a closer look at the records and activities of these people.

What does all this have to do with the events of 21 December 2013? We would still rather speak not of specific acts of violence but rather of their root causes. The Hamburg SPD has now had more than three years to make something presentable of a police department which went completely off the rails under Ronald Barnabas Schill and Ole van Beust. But the Hamburg SPD has done nothing other than allow the policies of Schill and his successors to continue unabated, an atrocious continuum that affects ever more everyday citizens, ever more frequently.

Since July 2013, for example, there has been a "Danger Zone" [basically a rights-free zone of curfews and zero-tolerance which has been called a "Martial Law Zone" by critics –ed.] in the Schanzen quarter. Allegedly it was established to deal with drug dealing, so we should accept it as totally normal and within the laws of policing. Of course, it hasn't unearthed very much crime, but plenty of abuses and infractions by the police themselves have been documented.

These “Danger Zones”—of which Schanze is only one, comprising a good part of the Hamburg city center “until further notice...”—are all worlds away from anything resembling a civilizational achievement, nearer rather to something akin to a police state. There have been calls for even more “Danger Zones,” to further disabuse police officers of the need to contemplate whether they can justify this or that intervention within civil law or not—nothing ever goes wrong, of course, during training!

In this climate, more and more police officers carry out their regular service with the same attitude imprinted on them in “Danger Zones.” And this after three years of SPD one-party rule in Hamburg.

Political Leadership: No Such Thing!

One Michael Neumann, a city Senator overseeing the Department of Interior and Sport since March 2011, has presided over the destabilization of the “Scene” in Schanze/St Pauli. Is he sitting down with the Senate head of the Building Authority or the Municipal Administration, or maybe someone from the Senate Chancellery, in order to discuss how to deal with the Rote Flora (or Mr. Klausmartin Kretschmer) and then convey how the city envisions the future use of the property? No. Where political leadership is needed, we come up empty, again and again.

It’s totally logical, of course, that the Rotflorists are on pins and needles and “climb the curtains” at every bump in the night, considering [property owner] Mr. Kretschmer’s agitation and the purposely-left-unclear views of the city Senate. The problem (for the city) is not the building, of course, but the people working out of it. The city must take a conceptual approach. To sit out the game hoping that the passage of time will bring a solution, brings precisely the conditions we are experiencing now in Hamburg. Now that (in connection with the events of 21 December 2013) parts of Elbchaussee have been occupied; city buildings have been attacked, and the district office of Eimsbüttel itself shows remarkable damage, there should be alarm bells going off. But they aren’t, really. The current political calculus (i.e. no calculus at all) can only go sour.

We point once again to the fact that the Police Department’s Strategy of Strength, which has been the consistent policy since Schill/von Beust (so, since 2001), considering the still-intensifying social conflicts, can only end in a lose-lose situation. These are fundamentally societal conflicts in which the police is for all intents and purposes powerless, just as during the altercations in the Paris suburbs last decade or in Great Britain (and by no means only in 2011). Hamburg is steering itself, thanks to complete political breakdown and the Police Department’s unchecked power-play, straight into just such a situation. And this quite determinedly, since the city government isn’t holding the reins, the Schill/von Beust Police Department is. In a democracy, isn’t the police an *instrument*, not an engine?

The most shocking thing about all this is that today, 27.5 calendar years after the Hamburg Pocket and a constitutionally adventurous—read: injurious—period of development in the laws of policing (or, at any rate, in the *practice* of policing), only a small minority challenges these clearly failing policies; public opinion appears to broadly support current police procedures, or at least is willing to smooth them over. This is the most blatant failure of all.

From root causes on 21 December 2013 (police shock troops ‘preventively’ attack the first rows of the protest march) to root causes leading up to 21 December 2013

In 2013 there were dozens of incidents in which Hamburg Police committed acts of brute violence against individuals—in the context of public assemblies and demonstrations, to be sure, but also in the conduct of other police work.

This resulted, in some cases, in serious injuries, all comparable to the injuries sustained by the Davidwache [this is the name of the Hamburg Police precinct building in St. Pauli, a neighborhood known for leftwing political agitation and adjacent to Schanze, where the Rote Flora is located –ed.] patrolman in the brutal late-night stone-throwing attack of 30 December 2013.

Only: while, in reaction to this inexcusable assault on a police officer, half the city descends into mourning and the mayor appears submissively in front of City Hall at the Police Union's so-called protest vigil [decrying budget cuts and the recent violence they have allegedly been facing –ed.] after his own traditional New Year's Address inside, nobody seems interested in the many violent police infractions of the past year.

As is nothing new, experienced attorneys have tended to advise *against* those affected by such police infractions taking legal action, because they will get the kitchen sink thrown at them: they will be accused of obstructing officers in the performance of duties as well as other offenses like inflicting bodily harm, etc. And then of course there will be five or ten witnesses in uniform there to testify, not to mention the problem of biased public defenders and much more. So rank victims of police violence prefer to remain anonymous, take no action, and aren't even entered into statistics.

We will indulge ourselves once more in pointing out that police officers have sworn an oath, in smug contrast to nearly all other occupations, to guard our rights and the law with their lives. They don't discard this oath in mere passing, but rather with substantial, formal effort.

A demonstration gets coaxed into crudeness through pre-emptive police violence

At the registered demonstration (under the right of assembly, such a demonstration need not be 'permitted,' but rather is, under observance of formal procedure, considered 'permitted' upon initial registration) on Saturday 21 December 2013, police prevented a lawful assembly. The demonstration was so completely kettled at its outset that the legitimate protest march could never commence.

The Hamburg Police limited the intended march to a stationary rally—the assembly's organizers had no opportunity to even assess the situation, let alone adapt and make the best of it. The Hamburg Police operated as though the assembly were prohibited and positioned its ranks initially only to *appear* to accompany the march as prescribed by the Trust Principle under the jurisprudence of the Federal Constitutional Court.

Instead, squads of shock troops acted as human battering rams (it cannot be described otherwise) upon the first rows of ready-to-march demonstrators, proceeding with massive bodily force, with the help of batons and other instruments of violence. And this without there having been, up to that point, any recognizable violence from the ranks of demonstrators (which just an announced order of dispersal can sometimes entail).

Instead, the demonstration (famously low-ball police estimates put the number of demonstrators at around 7,300; actually it may have been more than 10,000) was bashed to pieces by descending waves of riot police. Responsibility for the ensuing chaos and rolling exchange of violence was then placed solely in the lap of the demonstrators themselves by police, politicians and the media.

Let it be noted that the so-called radical activist 'Scene' has suffered the brutalities carried out by police in recent years—some bordering on the surreal—with incredible discipline and stoicism. Are we to believe that this suddenly ended on 21 December 2013?

It bears mentioning that, for some time now, it has required considerable courage to take part in demonstrations on these issues (Rote Flora, Lampedusa refugees, rising rent prices, etc.). This is essentially owing to the incompetent practices of the police.

The role of our Consortium

We do not carry the banner for any side of this conflict. We represent and defend rather that which is secured in Article 8 of the Constitution: the right of assembly and the concrete shape this right has taken over decades of settled case law.

These legal norms have nutmegged the Hamburg Police again and again [direct translation of author's apt and amusing soccer terminology –ed.]. Not always, but frequently enough that the basic tenets of these norms should have long been clear. Nonetheless, the events of 21 December 2013 were planned, calculated, focused, and conducted with the full knowledge of their gross injustice.

To fend off other potential distractions: members of the Consortium of Critical Police Officers were deployed in the line of duty that day; I myself was also present. Since our founding, from the very beginning, we have wanted only *better police*. But in fact the police is now considerably *worse* than in the 1980s. And even then it was, shall we say, in need of optimization.

In 1986, after the Hamburg Pocket at the Brokdorf demonstration and the series of police infractions in the days preceding it, as an advisor of students at the Police Academy I wrote a 12-point summary of events: “This violated constitutional civil rights...,” and so forth. It goes without saying that my demand that the Police Academy itself should investigate, deconstruct, and scientifically and legally analyze the Brokdorf deployment received no reply. Instead, department heads at this so-called institution of higher learning initiated a disciplinary proceeding against me. Today such a summary of infractions would extend to 20 points or more...and for an officer to assemble such a summary today would be much more dangerous to his or her official career status.

No matter if politicians and journalists get the causes and effects backwards or whether they block out, ignore, or set aside relevant antecedents from past years. The same behavior, sketched roughly and incompletely here, is common practice in the Police Department's own inner core.

What's up with the media?!?

It is of only limited use to point out that an article such as one on 22 December 2013 in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* called “Krawalle in Hamburg—Kalt wie der Gesetz” [Riots in Hamburg—Cold as the Law” –ed.], which rests on the assumption that everything in Hamburg played out in a context of observed rights and laws, is factually wrong. The important question is: where did the article's author, one esteemed Charlotte Parnack, get her information? She has quite simply been told tall tales. As if officials had held themselves to the letter of the law! Nevermind whether it makes any qualitative difference, in a constitutional democracy, if it is police officers or (common) citizens who break the law...This kind of simple-mindedness and lack of inquiry belongs in tabloids—but the SZ?

It is downright nauseating to hear reports on German radio such as one by Stefan Schölermann (NDR) on 22 December 2013 which spoke of “being used to this sort of thing in big cities,” but that the pre-emptive use of violence by demonstrators surpassed all his previous experience. Not only does this statement contain a bald falsehood (as evidenced by countless eyewitnesses and videos), but the esteemed Mr. Schölermann apparently is also not paying much attention to the concrete relationship between 21 December 2013 and preceding years.

It is downright defiance of reality for Frank Pergande to headline his article in the FAZ on 3 January 2014 “Das Ende der Folklore” and to explain what he means in the next sentence with: “Clashes with the police have long been treated in Hamburg as a valuable cultural tradition, a rite of passage...” Which Hamburg is this journalist writing about? Not the one that I know.

To cite tabloids here would only ramp up disgust with the loudest extension of the (formally) independent press which (actually) acts as an appendage of official government perspectives. Surely this appendage was not so infinitely long in the 1980s during comparable flare-ups (in regard to the Hafenstrasse disputes, for example). Big names in Hamburg, local celebrities who carried water in public opinion had influence back then too...but the difference was that the city Senate actually practiced political leadership at the time. Today? See above.

The importance of journalism as the Fourth Estate in a democracy is fundamental. In war and in peacetime. The revelations regarding NSA invasions of protected space, snooping on citizens sworn to professional discretion (doctors, attorneys, etc.) and even our politicians—and this with the aid of our own secret services and government agencies—would never have occurred without a responsible, daring news media.

During the NSU-murder-robbery scandal, much momentous information running counter to state interests and assets—including police, constitutional protection agencies, interior ministries, the Chancellery—had to be exposed and worked through. This kind of reporting was still taking place during our own foundational years as an organization, whether regarding police and Justice Ministry infractions against anti-nuclear demonstrators or regarding the Hamburg Pocket. Grandiose examples of brave journalistic work would more than fill up this press release.

Therefore the “Spectacle of Violence” taking place on countless front pages across Hamburg newsstands is not merely “moronic,” as guest contributor Christoph Twickel put it in SPIEGEL-online, but rather highly dangerous—and for anyone with a functional understanding of politics and policing in Hamburg, frankly wasteful and superfluous. Responsibilities are divorced from individual actions—a baton here, a kick there, pepperspray here, a stone thrown there, and so forth.

Politicians and police have blown it—hand in hand—and continue to. This is not particularly astounding. What is, is the concomitant and far-reaching way in which the media has blown it.

The Hamburg SPD is normalizing an ultra-reactionary Schill-style police force

The coarseness of Schill’s Hamburg Police has been well cared-for under nearly three years of Social-Democratic reign in Hamburg. Conceptually, structurally, and in terms of personnel, identity, and spirit of policing, city Senator of Interior Michael Neumann has left everything in the old mold. The Senator himself has no sense of direction.

Our press releases 1 through 3 on Hamburg’s interior politics can be viewed at www.kritische-polizisten.de. We have already leveled relatively moderate—though appropriate in terms of content—criticisms at Mr. Neumann considering his decisive position in such circles as Internal Security. We do not wish to repeat ourselves, just to point out that his deficiencies have truly blossomed in the current landscape.

The high-handedness of police conduct, with its impulse to hubris paired with an attitude of omnipotence and contrariness in the face of criticism—as has presented itself many times in response to expert criticism from professors at senior technical colleges—has not been meaningfully corrected by the current Senator of Interior, or his Police Chief of nearly two years. Quite the opposite.

The only change of chess pieces worth mentioning in this tableau, the replacement of the Schill-installed former Police Chief, was only *technically* the decision of the Senator of Interior—it was in fact brought about by opponents of Senator Neumann. And the current quite pitiable Police Chief [Wolfgang Kopitzsch] has hardly any idea what’s going on, since the disoriented Senator has prohibited him from reassembling the Department after his own wishes. Considering the Chief’s

father's résumé and his own merits at the National Police Academy, the load on this man's shoulders almost induces sympathy—but ultimately he is himself partly to blame.

No one should accuse us, as is currently a favorite pastime in Hamburg, of unilaterally taking sides against the police simply because we—one can read it in our name—are raising a critical voice. Our use of the Dove of Peace in our letterhead is not inadvertent, of course, but several of our own members were (unfortunately) also deployed on 21 December 2013. I was there myself, and we also rely on excellent contacts, quite apart from our own expertise.

But this bigotry, false representation, and slander—not only against us but against the citizenry's own parliamentarians, ignited in part by screeds in Mopo and the Hamburg Abendblatt—carries the same logic as police brutality itself, serving to distract from the disgusting infractions of higher officials to make us forget them. Its melodrama is beyond operatic.

A template for it can be found in the propaganda pieces accompanying the Brokdorf deployments of the 1970s and 80s as well as the Gorleben deployments and others, though naturally in different packaging. In terms of method it is nothing new, and it always seems to work. Without exception, citizens who take the right to assemble seriously are turned into anarchists and criminals.

Politics serves to distract rather than explain

Senator of Interior Michael Neumann declared on NDR, “responsibility rests solely with the criminals.” This is already pretty ridiculous, but it gets worse. According to an article in DIE WELT on 23 December 2013, “The SPD politician accused the autonomists of having no political goals. ‘This was not a demonstration. It was scheduled violence and criminality.’ The Order of Police in Hamburg spoke of a focused assault on the principles of democratic society.”

The Senator of Interior has here contradicted the correct belief of the vast preponderance of those assembled that they were indeed at a political demonstration; the Order of Police has mixed up its assignation of blame: for a long time it has been rather the Hamburg Police who have conducted themselves in a manner less than faithful to the constitution and the rule of law.

Apart from their substantial distortions, these quotations from the Senator and the Order of Police reflect in one paragraph precisely at which level the Senator stands.

The second function of this bigotry, false representation and so forth is to prevent the political discussion that brought so many people to a demonstration (only to be brutally repressed by state authority) from happening in the first place.

The escalation strategy of the police, then, prevents in *two ways* any political articulations the assembly may have hoped to make.

The Classics: the two Police Unions (GdP and PolGew)

The two Unions are in a bidding war for the hearts (read: memberships) of police officers.

While the one prepares mentally for the institution of the use of firearms (Gerhard Kirsch, GdP), as is already often discussed in the back rooms of police precincts, a regional leader of the other, PolGew (part of the German Civil Servants Association), had the audacity to answer Twitter user @HerrVanBohm's question as to why the “renowned” media weren't reporting the number of demonstrators injured thus: They “aren't demonstrators, just violent scum.” This was the leader of the Hessen chapter of the German Police Union, Björn Werminghaus.

Obviously the national leader of this same Police Union, Rainer Wendt, immediately asserted that this language is not common among police, while later qualifying his statement to SPIEGEL-online by saying his colleague had been in an understandable state of rage when he used the formulation.

The coarsening among officials, including many superiors (!), is very far along. One sees it in the interventions on the streets and hears it when they speak unguardedly. The Hamburg Police would not make any official comment regarding injured demonstrators in the days after 21 December 2013. The sociopathic and proto-fascist written formulation of the police functionary Werminghaus will apparently have to suffice.

The term “scum” [German: “Abschaum” –ed.] was used by racial ideologues at the time of German Fascism to describe “undesirable” groups like prostitutes or the homeless.

There’s not much that needs to be said about the PolGew under Rainer Wendt, actually, as many of its own members roll their eyes at it...but the example of GdP functionary (thus a member of the DGB—Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund, or German Labor Federation) Gerhard Kirsch, with his statements regarding the use of firearms, should indeed be taken up.

I worked with this man in a study group for two semesters after my time as a parliamentarian in Bonn. Even then he had to be occasionally restrained in his right-wing pronouncements. His appearances storming around the neighborhood in an SS-style greatcoat have remained legendary, from then until his time with the Davidwache.

“Kirsche,” as he was called, was also one of several associates who were immediately on board with proposals to completely cordon off the entire city of Hamburg during difficult situation assessments. Today, 20 years later, the Hamburg Police is going step by step in this direction, with its “Danger Zones,” etc. And this man is now the acting chairman of a national union in the German Labor Federation.

The right-leaning trend in our society since Unification [of East and West Germany –ed.] and the subsequent pogroms and acts of terror by the radical right is serious. The current prevailing self-conception of police departments nationwide should cause us and our politicians many a restless night—as far as our politicians ever notice it. The large Police Unions should of course be concerned themselves.

The primacy of politics

The lobbying of the Police Union has of course long been fruitful. Not only in the SPD—Union functionaries-cum-parliamentarians drive implementation of their pet policies in the German Bundestag as well as in many regional governments primarily through the CDU.

The spokesperson on domestic policy for the CDU party committee, Kai Voet van Vormizeele, is pushing a law change that would increase demonstrators’ potential legal liability, and the CDU parliamentarian Karl-Heinz Warnholz, according to reports by the Hamburger Morgenpost, has demanded introducing the use of rubber bullets; officers’ equipment “must be adapted to the increasing measure of criminal energy.” Further, “new responses” must be found to new “modes of attack” by demonstrators. Warnholz maintains that drivers’ license revocation or obstacles to high school or college graduation should be considered as possible penalties for demonstrators. So, how about stripping some civil rights?

This recently re-elected representative was himself in the Hamburg Police Department. Where? Of course: State Security. Several State Security officers, testifying before the Bundestag at the PUA hearings on the NSU scandal, showed just what sorts of detectives haunt German State Security

posts. Warnholz would fit right into the personnel portfolio of Schill and company. His and similar thinking is all too common among police officers. They seem to see no problem with such anti-constitutional and (even worse) anti-human nonsense.

I make no secret of the fact that, owing to my own career history in politics, I follow the internal discussions in the Green Party especially closely. There it is similarly shocking: their approach is that of total beginners. As if the experience of the party's own contentious founding had never occurred. So it's essentially the same thing: despite a bit of song and dance at their so-called Police Congresses (including one in Hamburg), they tend to duck away when things get real. The Black-Greens in Hamburg could simply launch a new wing of the CDU and march on over in tight formation. Exceptions (dear Christian Ströbele!) prove the rule.

Unforgotten are the Black-Green salad days in Hamburg, over 2.5 years between 2008 and 2010, in which the dropping of one political dud after another led to a premature collapse and the subsequent all-too-predictable implosion of both the CDU and the Greens.

It is simply absurd—though it does make the utter ineffectuality of the Green Party at the time more comprehensible—that the main protagonists of those days, for example a Green Senator of Environment who signed off on a coal-fired power plant with a nominal capacity over 1,700 MW and on (yet another) Education Reform Package that did an end-run around the ostensibly required public input process, were *rewarded* for their disservice.

Senator of Environment Anja Hajduk was sent off once again to the Bundestag; Jens Kerstan (who talks and acts like a sassy Kermit the Frog) is now the party chairman; Till Steffen, having dabbled a while as Justice Senator, is taking a shot at becoming a reputable parliamentarian now in the role of spokesman on Transportation; and so it all skips gleefully along.

That Hamburg's Green and Left parties let the special session of the Internal Affairs Select Committee get kicked down the road, to Monday 6 January 2014 at 17:00—thus 17 days after the abolition of the right of assembly by the Hamburg Police instead of immediately thereafter—is just plain shameful. Of course this extra time was used to create brand-new facts on the ground:

- Open-ended "Danger Zones" have been established in half the city center. This means the police can stop and search anyone, without cause or explanation. In addition, expulsions and bans from the areas in question can be issued, and people taken into custody. Residents have been assured they won't be disturbed—what can only be seen as a ridiculous assertion against the backdrop of previous experiences with "Danger Zones" in Hamburg.
- The propaganda of the police and their associated media has kicked into high gear.
- Of course the evidence situation will be whipped into shape. We'll see where the videos taken as evidence end up...
- What will take place at the special session can already be imagined: before anyone at all from the opposition gets a word in, Senate representatives and their affiliates are scheduled to speak until 22:00.

What Hamburg could really use is clear heads in the Senate and citizenry, to provide for clarity on the Rote Flora question instead of leaving all concerned parties in the dark about how things will proceed regarding the property. To that end there must be a proper accounting of the incidents of 21 December 2013.

The ongoing handling of the despicable attack and wounding of police officers on 28 December 2013, by (among others) the homicide unit and a State Security investigation team, defies description and is clearly more of a tone-setting exercise than an appropriate method of inquiry. The homicide unit and their State Security cohorts should rather be looking into the countless victims of police brutality.

The Moderation Principle of policing seems to have been completely dispensed with. Naked politicking has taken its place, which makes sense if the above demand on the Senate for clarity on the future of the Rote Flora is indeed justified.

Perhaps a Parliamentary Inquest is in order? At any rate it would be desirable if *outside* experts, even from outside Germany, could investigate the matter.

And: the next demonstration—coming inevitably as a replacement for and answer to the assembly destroyed utterly by police forces on 21 December 2013—should be well-prepared. As it stands in the constitution: peaceful and unarmed.

Please publicize.

Thomas Wüppesahl