

Experts quibble as right wi

Racism in Germany is mounting again, leaving 10 people dead in neo-Nazi attacks against 'foreigners' in the past two years. But the government and experts are divided on how severe the problem is, Cape Town reporter REHANA ROSSOUW found during a recent trip to Germany.

"NEVER again!" vowed the survivors of the Holocaust after Allied forces liberated them from Nazi concentration camps in Germany in 1945.

Yet less than 50 years later, an atrocity was once again committed by Nazi sympathisers at a German concentration camp. Last October, two youths vandalised the Sachsenhausen concentration camp memorial in Oranienburg, north of Berlin, seriously damaging a museum depicting Jewish suffering in the camp.

Both were acquitted by a German judge who ruled that there was insufficient evidence to prove they had been motivated by ideological beliefs.

The arson attack and acquittal has raised the question of whether the Germany the world despised during the Third Reich is on the rise again.

The world watched in horror in September last year when a xenophobic mob went on the rampage in Rostock against a hostel for asylum seekers. "Germany for the



books on German racism, including an examination of the Rostock attacks, believes the problem is more serious.

"There have been a lot of attempts to overcome Germany's Nazi past, but there has been a lot of denial too," Funke said. "In the 1950s, when there was an upsurge in racist attacks, we had to face our heritage and admit we could learn some lessons by empathising with minorities and oppressed people.

"But after the unification of east and west Germany in 1989, because of the resultant economic and cultural problems, the right became more aggressive and violent than ever before."

The attacks on asylum seekers in Rostock clearly illustrated that German racism has its roots in the socio-economic misery - especially of the youth - caused by the political and cultural transformation process in

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