

Germany: The Nazi terrorist cell and the poison of anti-communism

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In a commentary in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* headlined the “poison of dictatorship”, Constanze von Bullion vents her spleen against the former East Germany (GDR). It is no coincidence that “the brown [fascist] band of assassins comes from the East”, she says, and raises the question: “Is one generation taking its revenge on their socialist parents?”

A professor’s son and a labourer, accompanied by a gardener, had set off from their “post-socialist parents’ homes” in the ex-GDR on a revenge campaign that shook the whole country, she wrote. The massacre was directed against a pluralistic society and the rule of law, which in many minds, and “especially East German ones”, had remained a foreign land.

Von Bullion is in a rage. She recommends that those who “now cry out and protest against scolding the Ossis [East Germans]” should hold their breath. There were also murderous racists in the West, but anyone “looking at the map of far-right killings cannot deny the [existence of a] brown horde in the East,” she says.

Why, she asks, “is it the children of former anti-fascists who lead the brown troops?” And answers with her opinions about the alleged failures of the GDR family, which had acted as a “refuge from state oppression” and as a “den of ideological instruction”. Family life in the GDR was “surprisingly hands off” as far as the “rearing of offspring” was concerned, claims von Bullion.

She then concludes that where the “uncomfortable working through of the [history of the] GDR” is declared complete before reaching into the private sphere, “the poison of dictatorship” slips into the next generation.

Von Bullion’s agitation and rhetorical rampage is a reaction to the exposure of the state security authorities in the case of the neo-fascist killing spree. For 13 years, the murderous trio from Jena, in Thuringia, were able to wage a bloody, racist campaign against foreigners—killing at least 19 people in cold blood and committing a multitude of armed bank robberies—because this right-wing terrorist operation was covered up, tolerated and at least partially funded by the state security authorities.

Increasingly, new facts about the involvement of the various intelligence agencies with the far-right scene are dealing a double blow to the ideological cement that has obscured the class character of German society since time immemorial.

Firstly, it makes clear what should be thought of the supposedly democratic structures and traditions of the state security authorities, especially the secret service—the misnamed “Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution”. The brown networks

and cliques of former Nazis extend into the present. This means not only are the security services blind in the right eye, but form a pact with the far-right because they regard the threat as always coming from the left—i.e., from the working class.

On the other hand, the reactionary character of the collapse of East Germany and its re-integration into the West becomes ever clearer. The reunification of Germany on a capitalist basis, which is still accompanied by a torrent of words about the supposed regaining of democracy and freedom in the East, was in truth a social and political counter-revolution. The introduction of capitalist exploitation into the East created a breeding ground for far-right terrorism.

Constanze von Bullion responds with a well-known ideological reflex: anti-communism. The GDR was at fault, she says. Its authoritarian regime shaped family structures and led to undemocratic ways of thinking being passed on to the next generation. In autumn 2011, 22 years after the collapse of the GDR, von Bullion has no other argument than to repeat the hackneyed propaganda of the Cold War. The poison of anti-communism is systematically employed to muddy the waters and pollute the argument.

But facts are stubborn things.

One thing is certain: The far-right scene in the East was built up after the fall of the Berlin Wall in close collaboration with the secret service, under whose eyes the murderous trio conducted their bloody, racist campaign against foreigners. It is also clear that Helmut Roewer, who ran the secret service in Thuringia from 1994 to 2000, did not come from the GDR; he studied law at the University of Konstanz, before beginning a career in the Interior Ministry in Bonn.

The Thuringia secret service (and not just this one) was actively involved in the construction of neo-Nazi organisations in the East following the collapse of the GDR. The right-wing network “Thuringian Homeland Security” (THS), which spawned the Jena terrorist group, was established in close connection with the secret service, who also provided finances. According to the head of the THS, Tino Brandt, who was unmasked in 2001 as an undercover agent, he pocketed 200,000 deutschmarks for his seven years working as an informer for the secret service, and used all the money to build up various right-wing groups.

Brandt was only one of many such paid secret service informers. Another militant neo-Nazi in Thuringia, Thomas Dienel, was also funded by the secret service in the 1990s. He allegedly received

25,000 deutschmarks for his activities spreading right-wing propaganda and building up right-wing groups. It has been clearly established that one in seven members of the far-right German National Party (NPD) was—and probably still is—on the payroll of the secret service.

The security services have been so notoriously blind concerning the activities of right-wing terrorists that only someone completely naive could believe it a coincidence. Even the chair of the Parliamentary Committee on Internal Affairs, Wolfgang Bosbach (Christian Democratic Union, CDU), who makes no secret of his own right-wing attitudes, said he had never encountered such an abundance of misconceptions in a single criminal complex.

In January 1998, the police discovered a bomb workshop with pipe bombs and 1.4 kilograms of TNT explosive in the garage of Beate Zschäpe. Although another member of the Jena trio was there during the search of the garage, he was not arrested. The three—Uwe Böhnhardt, Uwe Mundlos and Zschäpe—were then able to go underground.

According to research by the East German broadcaster Mitteldeutsche Rundfunk, the trio were located a few days later in Chemnitz by investigators from the Thuringian State Criminal Police (LKA). However, the planned arrest by a special task force (SEK) was called off by the LKA at the last minute.

We now know that after going underground, the trio maintained many contacts with the far-right scene, a milieu heavily infiltrated by informants, which even organised public solidarity concerts, handing them the proceeds.

The Military Counterintelligence Service (MAD) also possessed information on the whereabouts of the group. As the magazine *Focus* has reported, this was confirmed by the president of MAD, Karl-Heinz Brüsselbach, to members of the Parliamentary Control Panel (PKG) in a secret meeting held very recently. A tip-off by a MAD undercover agent was not followed up.

Information provided by the security authorities remains sparse and contradictory. Officially, the impression is given that the murder trio acted largely independently, and the role of undercover agents in the direct environs of the group is still subject to secrecy.

Highly suspect in this context is the role of the Hesse state security agent Andreas T., who was present in 2006 in an Internet cafe in Kassel when the owner was shot by the Jena terrorist group. T. was known in his native village by the nickname “little Adolf”. Weapons and right-wing journals were found in his apartment. According to Bild.de, he had been an informant in the Thuringia Homeland Security for years and was placed near the crime scene in five other killings by the trio.

The connections of the secret service with the far-right are not new; they have a history. When the West German domestic intelligence service was founded in 1950 under the auspices of the Allies, then coming under the control of the Adenauer government in 1955, a striking number of high positions were occupied by former Nazi SS and SD (Security Service) people. Hubert Schrubbbers (CDU), who headed the secret service for 17 years, had served the Nazi regime as a member of the SA (Stormtroopers) and as attorney general.

The secret service did not pursue the old Nazis in Germany, who soon returned to their posts, but their opponents and members of

the Communist Party (KPD), which was officially banned in 1956, who were suppressed and persecuted.

The involvement of the secret service in far-right terrorism is also nothing new. The informant Bernd Schmidt trained the young assassins who then killed five Turkish immigrants in 1993 in an arson attack on a house in Solingen. Hans Dieter Lepzien, who built bombs for a neo-Nazi group in Lower Saxony, also worked for the secret service—like Joachim Apel, who supplied weapons for the Emden “National Socialist [Nazi] Militia” and supported them in arson attacks, and Karl Peter Weinmann, a member of the heavily-armed “Hoffmann military sports group”.

The far-right cliques in West Germany were not created in the GDR. After the war, many from the West were attracted to the GDR because they were disgusted and outraged by the influence of former Nazis in the Adenauer era. However, the reactionary politics of the Stalinist regime in East Berlin repelled many others, providing ammunition for anti-communist propaganda in the West.

The collapse of the GDR, as well as the Soviet Union and the other Eastern European countries, strengthened the most reactionary political forces. In Hungary and other Eastern European states, openly fascist and anti-Semitic parties now form part of the government.

The contempt for their fellow humans exhibited by the murderous trio from Jena is an expression of a social system based on growing state repression and brutality. Living conditions for the majority of the population are steadily worsening and more and more people are being forced into poverty and despair, while a super-rich financial aristocracy stuffs its pockets and seeks to preserve its limitless riches.

At the same time, social tensions are being directed systematically along racist lines. Last year, Thilo Sarrazin, the Social Democrat and former finance minister in the Berlin city government, published his racist theories. Among other things, he claimed that three generations of Muslim immigrants had not brought Germany any “economic value”. The echo of Nazi propaganda about “lives less worthy” was unmistakable. Nevertheless, Sarrazin was celebrated and courted in the media.

The murders carried out by the Jena terrorist group are an indictment of the capitalist system and the existing political conditions. The clumsy, anti-communist arguments of Constanze von Bullion change nothing.



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