

Germany: New revelations on state links to far-right NSU

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Largely unreported in the media, many new facts and details have come to light in recent weeks about the involvement of various state bodies in the far-right National Socialist Underground (NSU) terror network. These confirm that, early on, significant parts of the state apparatus were active in the immediate environs of the terrorist group.

The NSU is alleged to have murdered nine foreign small businessmen and a policewoman between September 2000 and April 2007.

Beate Zschäpe, the only survivor of the so-called terrorist trio, and some alleged supporters are currently on trial before the Munich Higher Regional Court. But there is to be no examination of how state agencies were involved in the murders. On the contrary, the trial serves to shift the focus onto a handful of neo-Nazis, while downplaying the role of the secret services and police.

The committees of investigation of various state legislatures, however, are producing regular and new revelations of deep state involvement with the NSU—even if the political parties in the committees want to prevent their disclosure.

In June, a previously unknown source of the Thuringia state secret service (LfV) was revealed in the immediate milieu of the NSU. Plainclothes police officer Sven Wunderlich testified that the former girlfriend of the accused Ralf Wohlleben, on trial in Munich, gave the LfV information more than a dozen times over a six-month period between 1998 and 1999. Receiving 100 to 200 deutschemarks each time, Juliane W., alias “Jule”, reported from inside the far-right scene.

The Thuringia LfV told *Neues Deutschland* that the relevant files had been given unredacted to the investigation committees of the Bundestag (federal

parliament) and the Thuringian state parliament more than a year ago. However, this explosive information was not publicised.

“Jule” was certainly not the only state agent operating in the milieu surrounding the NSU. This environment was known to consist of at least 129 supporters, of whom more than 20 were on the payroll of the police and intelligence agencies.

Juliane W. supported the trio directly when they went underground in early 1998. She was given the keys to the homes of two of the gang—Beate Zschäpe and Uwe Mundlos—so she could get them clothing. In February of the same year, she held a power of attorney signed by Zschäpe, using it to demand the return of confiscated property from police.

The new findings fit seamlessly with earlier revelations, proving that the authorities were well informed about the circumstances of the NSU trio when they went to ground. It can be assumed that the Thuringia LfV also spoke to Juliane W. about the fugitives’ possible whereabouts.

The authorities in Thuringia are not the only ones that seem to be hiding something. The testimony of Detective Chief Commissioner Conrad Pitz to the investigating committee of the Bavarian state parliament last June was also of great significance. According to this, the authorities have known about the NSU’s existence since at least 2007.

In 2007, Pitz was a member of the “Bosphorus” special commission, tasked with investigating the murders of nine small business operators of foreign origin that year. The term “NSU” was used at that time in a staff meeting of his unit, he said. It was even explained what this abbreviation stood for—namely, the “National Socialist Underground”. In addition, it was said that it was a “right-terrorist group” and that it

could be linked with the murders that the special commission was investigating.

Someone from the unit's leadership had made these remarks, according to Pitz. It had concerned evidence from the Saxon or Thuringia state secret service, which one he was no longer sure.

A few weeks later, a colleague, Chief Inspector Karl Richter, had told Pitz they wouldn't be pursuing these lines of enquiry. "The trail has gone cold," Richter reportedly told Pitz.

Before the committee, Richter himself denied ever hearing about the "NSU" before 2011. In cross-examination, both Pitz and Richter insisted on their own presentation of the events.

Pitz had previously turned to the Green Party faction in the Bavarian state parliament, seeking a hearing for his report. When he was asked by some parliamentary deputies why he had not turned to his superiors in the police, he said, they would "finish you off out good and proper." According to newspaper reports, he was removed from the special commission, banned from having any contact with his colleague, and finally he was transferred.

There is also new evidence concerning the June 2004 nail-bomb attack in Cologne's Keupstraße, in which more than 20 people were injured, some seriously, showing the involvement of various state bodies.

Shortly after the attack, local resident Ali Demir presented himself to the police as a witness, and stated that he had seen two armed plainclothes police officers on the scene long before the arrival of uniformed police and rescue workers. Demir also told neighbours and journalists about his observations.

The police ignored his testimony for years. Questioned by broadcaster *WDR*, the North Rhine-Westphalia state interior ministry and the Cologne police declared in November 2012 that no police officers had been at the scene.

Only following an official request by the Bundestag committee of investigation did the authorities declare—more than eight years after the attack—that there actually had been two officers in Keupstraße. In May of this year, they supposedly gave testimony to the committee in Berlin.

But Demir denies these were the same police officers. He was never shown any photos of the alleged police officers by the authorities, let alone saw them presented

in a line-up, so *WDR* journalists took the matter into their own hands. They showed Demir video recordings of the men who had appeared before the investigation committee.

"The men I saw were smaller and more powerful than the two police officers who attended the committee. These were not the two men outside my door in Keupstraße", he was certain. Moreover, the two men told the committee they had been in uniform while at Keupstraße.

Apparently, the police are not only concealing essential information but seeking to completely obscure it. The Federal Criminal Police Office had previously held back video material from the busy Cologne shopping street, recorded in the area around the attack. Only when one of the victim's lawyers in the NSU trial was able to gain access to some of the material could it be established that in addition to Uwe Böhnhardt and Uwe Mundlos, the neo-Nazi Ronny W. could also be found on the list of 129 NSU supporters.



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