

German state security intimidates opposition

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Last week, German police and security officials investigated a young man from the town of Griesheim because he was critical of the secret services' surveillance methods and jokingly proposed taking a walk to look at a US military building. The case shows how the infrastructure of a police state has been created in Germany.

On July 4, 28-year-old Daniel B. announced on his Facebook page that he would walk to the US military's Dagger Complex in Griesheim. The hermetically sealed building complex has been linked with the espionage activities of the National Security Agency (NSA).

The young man's post was clearly meant ironically. Under the title, "NSA Spy Welfare Association invites you to experience detection and surveillance", he announced plans for an "exploration of the threatened habitat of the NSA spies."

He intended this humorous statement only for a few friends, as a satirical way of dealing with a topic that had seriously worried and preoccupied him. In an earlier post on his page, he says, "It has annoyed me more and more to see how the US, NATO, the EU, the government or global corporations unceasingly and illegally monitor and control my life."

The NSA and police seized on this ironic post to intimidate the young man. On July 10 at 7:17 in the morning, he received a call from the police, who asked if he knew anything about the event at the Dagger Complex. Shortly afterwards, Griesheim police officers were knocking at his door. "The officer on the phone told me to talk to his colleagues at the door," he recalls.

On the same day, he received a call from a secret service official in Darmstadt, who also later called in person. In this conversation, Daniel B. was asked about his political beliefs and whether he had contact with "violent groups". The officers ordered him to register any protest walk with the authorities as a demonstration, demanding that Daniel say nothing

about the discussion they had just held.

He did not abide by this ban, however, but reported the uninvited visit on his Facebook page. He told local media that the officers had said they had been informed about the planned protest walk by the American military police. He then did register the event, which had now become public, as a demonstration.

The approximately 80 participants who eventually arrived in Griesheim were accompanied every step of the way by police officers. Even a police helicopter was used. Daniel B. has again called for renewed protests around the Dagger Complex this Saturday.

This attempt to intimidate a young man who wanted to express his opposition to comprehensive surveillance by the secret services is a fundamental attack on democratic rights, sending a clear warning to workers in Germany and internationally.

The police and security services acted openly as a political police force, threatening or suppressing opposition.

The fact that the information about the protest walk came from the American secret service or military police, also points to the close collaboration between the intelligence services and the police. Clearly, various domestic and international intelligence agencies pass on their largely illegally collected data to the police authorities, which take action against individuals.

Based on the experience of Hitler's Gestapo—literally, Secret State Police—collaboration between the police and secret services was officially banned in post-war Germany. However, as a result of the so-called "war on terror," the link has been fully re-established. The example of Daniel B. shows that there is no separation of powers in everyday practice. The data intelligence agencies illegally collect is passed onto the police authorities, which then seek to intimidate oppositional sentiment.

In this way, the infrastructure of a police state has

been created in Germany. The step from visiting people suspected of oppositional sentiment to arresting them—or, as in the US practice of drone murder, killing them—has long been in preparation and corresponds to the logic of previous development.

Earlier this year, US Attorney General Eric Holder suggested that Washington might use drone strikes to carry out deadly attacks inside the United States itself.

Across Europe, democratic rights are under attack. In Greece, which in this respect serves as a model for the whole of the EU, not only have comprehensive bans on strikes and demonstrations been imposed, but also the state has systematically supported the attacks of the fascists and sections of the police against immigrants and political opponents.

The fundamental reason for this policy is the growth of social inequality. The brutal social attacks that are being pushed through to save the profits of big business in Europe are no longer compatible with democratic rights for the mass of the people. As in the 1930s, the ruling elites are prepared to use the most brutal methods to defend their own wealth.

This is why Chancellor Angela Merkel and her Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrich strongly defend the US surveillance program Prism, despite the violation of German economic interests. For many years, the German government has not only received information from the US program, but also maintains its own comprehensive spying programs.



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