

Germany: All-party coalition defends the secret services

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The 1,409-page parliamentary report presented last week contains hundreds of indications proving that the right-wing terrorist National Socialist Underground (NSU) was established with the direct help of the secret service and other security agencies. The three members of the group committed at least nine racist murders and killed a police officer between 2000 and 2007.

Meanwhile, there is evidence showing there were at least 25 secret service or police assets among the 129 people known to form the periphery of the NSU trio. The first murder weapon and the first safe house were provided to the NSU by an undercover secret service agent. Some of these cases are described in detail in the report.

In addition, the report by the parliamentary committee of inquiry into the NSU shows how the various intelligence agencies have systematically hindered the full exposure of the NSU. Three days after the NSU blew apart, a secret service division chief destroyed files concerning undercover agents within the “Thuringian Homeland Security”, from which the NSU had emerged. It has been proved that this happened outside official channels and can only be seen as the concealment of crimes.

But the parliamentary committee of inquiry did not go into these matters; it has sought to cover them up. The committee did not even establish the true identity of the person responsible, who appeared before them under the code name “Lothar Lingen”. Again and again, the members of the committee showed themselves satisfied with the lies, prevarication and excuses of the various security agencies, and published only what was already known.

Only last week, Interior Minister Hans-Peter Friedrich (Christian Social Union, CSU), who bears overall responsibility for the secret service, insisted on

deletions or redactions being made to 118 passages in the report. Even information that had long appeared in the press had to be partially removed. There could be no question of any control of the executive being exercised by parliament, a fundamental democratic principle.

The censorship practised in Prussia under Kaiser Friedrich would not be necessary. From the CSU to the Left Party, all the establishment parties have sought to whitewash the intelligence agencies and cover over their role in building up the far right scene. The report, which was drafted jointly by representatives of all the parliamentary parties, tries to present the systematic support of right-wing terrorists by the secret services as being the result of sloppiness and mistakes.

There had been “serious regulatory failings and mistakes, and a lack of organization,” says the document. “But we have seen no evidence that the authorities knew who the perpetrators are, and protected them”, said the chair of the committee, Sebastian Edathy (SPD). The SPD committee member Eva Högl added: “We have looked at every crumb [of evidence] with a large magnifying glass, but have not found a single piece of proof”.

In its dissenting opinion to the report, the Left Party too emphasizes that there had been a “failure” by the authorities. The “fatal misjudgement of the secret service and police” had blocked the investigators’ way, the party writes.

Given the known facts, these statements are simply inaccurate. That they remain unchallenged in official politics and the wider media, however, is an expression of the decay of democratic principles.

The entire political establishment is willing to cover up and facilitate the illegal machinations and involvement of the security apparatus with the far right.

This is shown mainly by the demands formulated in the report's conclusions. Besides the cynical phrases about civic engagement and an awareness of the authorities regarding racism found there, the main concept expressed is the need for strengthening the security apparatus.

All parties propose extending the powers of the federal prosecutor's office. In addition, data collected by the state secret service agencies, the police and the relevant federal agencies should be centrally collected and evaluated. In this way, the separation of police and secret service, which was introduced after the Second World War following the experience with Hitler's Gestapo, will be further eroded.

The details about the NSU already published show that the intelligence agencies, which were all established by old Nazis following the war, still have close links to right-wing terrorism. Nevertheless, they are to be strengthened, centralized and provided with executive powers over the police.

The NSU committee of inquiry has resulted in an all-party coalition in defence of the intelligence agencies and the systematic strengthening of the state apparatus. The Christian Democrats, Free Democratic Party, Greens and Left Party all want to maintain and expand the complex of intelligence agencies and right-wing terrorists.

This state within a state is reminiscent of the Weimar Republic in the 1920s and 30s, in which right-wing paramilitary groups were largely immune from legal sanctions and enjoyed close links to the state apparatus, which in turn supported them. Later, they formed an important basis for Hitler's fascist gangs.

As for today, right-wing violence is cultivated in order to suppress popular discontent arising from extreme social polarization. Plans for vicious social attacks have already been prepared, regardless of which parties form the government after the general election on September 22. What began in Greece will be extended to Germany. Therefore, the police and intelligence agencies are being given what they need to suppress any social opposition.

The Left Party plays a special role within this broad coalition. Like all other parties, it supported the report and its conclusions. Its representative on the committee, Petra Pau, even enthused about the "exemplary" cooperation by all the parliamentary factions. At the

same time, it tries to cover up these right-wing politics.

In its dissenting opinion, the party issues a hollow call for the dissolution of the secret service. In its stead would be established a "coordinating body to document group-based misanthropy" and defend the constitution, as well as to prevent "subversive tendencies" without using secret service means. The Left Party's demand simply amounts to a reorganization of the secret service under another name. At the same time it supports, like all the other parties, the strengthening of the security apparatus through the central collection and analysis of data from all the various official authorities.



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