

Germany: Cover-up of Oktoberfest bombing continues

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Although federal prosecutor Harald Range resumed investigations into the Oktoberfest bombing in December 2014, circumstances surrounding the most serious right-wing terrorist attack in German post-war history continue to be concealed from the general public. This is the import of the most recent documentary film, *Group plot or sole perpetrator? New insights into the Oktoberfest bombing*, produced by Daniel Harrich and broadcast by Bavarian Television on October 6.

Journalist Ulrich Chaussy, whose research informs the film, is not only concerned with the many unresolved questions arising in the wake of the attack; he also deals intensively with the ongoing inquiry conducted by a special commission of the Bavarian State Criminal Investigations Office.

On September 26, 1980, the explosion of a pipe bomb at the entrance of the Munich Oktoberfest event killed 13 people and injured more than 200, many of them seriously. Although the bomber, Gundolf Köhler, who was killed in the explosion, was in contact with the far-right Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann (Hoffmann Military Sports Group) and there was plenty of evidence of his complicity in the crime, the Bavarian State Criminal Investigations Office and federal prosecutor Kurt Rebmann rapidly committed themselves to a sole perpetrator thesis, terminating the investigation after two years.

Chaussy immediately began to involve himself with the case and has since worked tirelessly to bring to light what really happened. He has revealed that suspiciously lopsided investigations were carried out, important pieces of evidence and statements of witnesses disappeared, and a large number of potential courtroom exhibits were destroyed. In the updated documentary, he proves that not only one severed hand—signifying the existence of an accomplice—went astray in the course of the investigation, but two hands.

Towards its end, the documentary also deals with the current investigation by the special commission, codenamed “26 September 1980”. Chaussy had given investigators the names of numerous witnesses who could provide evidence

of Gundolf Köhler’s possible accomplices. Hans Roauer, who was willing to make a statement in the film, said he saw the bomber arguing with the occupants of a car, shortly before he put the bomb into the rubbish bin where it then exploded.

Shortly after the bombing, the injured Roauer was questioned in hospital by a police officer and he told what he had seen. After that he was never interrogated again. Now new investigators have interviewed him. Roauer says that during these proceedings officers placed a report before him and asked whether it was his testimony.

He was extremely surprised “that this report suddenly emerged again from 1980.” Until then, he had been told that there was no such record. Moreover, its contents were distorted. The part where Köhler hastily walked away from the car was missing from his original declaration. Chaussy emphasised: “That means, precisely, that the proof that Köhler was not alone” had been erased from the report.

Chaussy also spoke with Günther G., the former policeman who had recovered the second severed hand. Günther G. reported that he had been questioned at length by the new investigators. Towards the end, after two and a half hours, the interrogating officer had sent two women who were present out of the room, in order to talk with him in private. He said the officer doubted his testimony. “He said I’d cooked up a good story”, the ex-policeman reported. He also said his interrogator appeared “stunned”, as though he was unprepared for what he had heard.

Another witness told Chaussy that investigators had asked him whether he had received money for his interview with Chaussy. They also told this witness that if he had anything to say in the future, he shouldn’t go to Chaussy.

Chaussy had also tried to get an interview with the investigators engaged in the special commission. After a great deal of resistance, he was finally granted one, but under strict conditions. He had to submit his questions in advance, and half of them were ruled out. Chaussy was not permitted to ask any questions about the investigators’ dealings with the witnesses he himself had named.

His question as to whether the special commission was investigating the inconsistencies and unanswered questions of the previous investigations—such as where the various witness testimonies were—was answered indirectly in the negative by special commission head Mario Huber several times. Huber merely stated: “We are investigating whether Gundolf Köhler had accomplices, whether any such people can be investigated and whether they are still alive.”

The answer to the questions of why and by whom the investigations were hampered at that time was, in Chaussy’s opinion, the key to solving the Oktoberfest crime. But that is something the investigating authorities seem to have no interest in doing.

When the case was reopened a year ago due to the work of Chaussy and victims’ attorney Werner Dietrich, the *World Socialist Web Site* warned that “federal prosecutor Range and the investigating authorities will again do everything possible to cover up the true identities of those behind the Oktoberfest bombing”.

We then referred to federal justice minister Heiko Maas (Social Democratic Party, SPD), who declared that in view of the shortcomings in the investigations of National Socialist Underground (NSU) murders, “any loss of confidence in the work of the state’s law enforcement agencies (has to be) countered”. Harrich and Chaussy’s documentary has now confirmed this warning.

Government, judicial and security authorities want to prevent the public from finding out about the infestation of neo-Nazis within the state and federal intelligence services. The collaboration of Nazi and neo-Nazi networks with security agencies, set up and directed by former Nazis after the Second World War, has continued unabated to the present day.

In both the feature film *The Blind Spot* and the documentary, Chaussy and Harrich deal with former Bavarian state security head Hans Langemann (played in the movie by Heiner Lauterbach). The day after the 1980 bombing, Langemann had defied the news blackout imposed by the federal prosecutor general, and informed the press about the identity of the bomber (Gundolf Köhler) and his connections to the far-right Wehrsportgruppe Hoffmann. Köhler’s right-wing milieu was thereby put on the alert.

Langemann, who had served on the Eastern Front in World War II at the age of 18, followed his law studies with a post in the Federal Intelligence Service (BND) in 1957. He revered its director, Reinhard Gehlen, who was responsible for the “Ostauflklärung” (intelligence operations in the East) under Hitler. Following Gehlen’s retirement and his own tenure at the German embassy in Rome in 1973, he moved to the Bavarian Interior Ministry, where he was responsible for state security.

The documentary includes an interview with a former investigator of the Federal Criminal Police Office, Frank P. Heigl, who cooperated with Langemann to write a book about his time in the BND. He says Langemann told him: “We have to clean up the leftists.” He added that, for Langemann, right-wingers were the “clean ones” and he only saw danger coming from the left. Langemann was closely connected with the extreme right, according to Heigl.

The connections between state authorities and right-wing extremist networks are seamless. There were at least 25 undercover agents in the milieu of the National Socialist Underground, whose members shot and killed nine immigrants and a policewoman between 2000 and 2007. Moreover, new informants and intelligence service employees are continually being unmasked in right-wing and neo-Nazi organisations.

During criminal proceedings against surviving NSU member Beate Zschäpe before the Munich higher regional court two weeks ago, testimony was given by Mario Brehme, who in the 1990s helped to establish the neo-Nazi Thuringian Homeland Security (THS), from which the NSU emerged. When asked by the lawyer of one of the joint plaintiffs whether he had worked for the Military Counterintelligence Service (MAD), he refused to make a statement.

If Brehme had actually been a MAD agent, then it follows that the THS was set up by two agents of the intelligence services. It has been proven that THS leader Timo Brandt worked for the federal intelligence agency.

It was also revealed last week that Roland Sokol, the recently deceased right-wing co-founder of Hooligans against Salafists (Hogesa), was an undercover agent. A year ago, the Hooligans engaged in a battle with police in Cologne. The violent confrontation, which made nationwide headlines, had all the hallmarks of a targeted provocation. At the time, the police authorities had sent only a small contingent of officers, even though they knew in advance that several thousand violent soccer hooligans would be there.

Forces within the state apparatus were deliberately attempting to establish a right-wing, fascist movement. The Pegida movement (“Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the West”) also began to launch demonstrations in Dresden in this period.



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