

German intelligence agent drove alleged perpetrator in Christmas market attack to Berlin

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One week after the attack on a Christmas market in Berlin, there is a growing chorus of demands for a massive strengthening of the state apparatus, the elimination of basic democratic rights, and the erection of new barriers against refugees.

At its upcoming congress at the start of January, the Bavarian-based Christian Social Union (CSU), part of the coalition government headed by its sister party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), plans to call for more personnel and better equipment for the security services, additional powers for law enforcement, more monitoring of emails and communications services such as Whatsapp and Skype, and increased data exchanges between the European Union countries.

This is despite the fact that the Berlin attack cannot be attributed to a lack of surveillance or police powers granted to the security and judicial authorities. On the contrary, the alleged perpetrator, Anis Amri, prepared his action literally under the eyes of the authorities. It has now emerged that the 24-year-old Tunisian was driven to Berlin by an undercover informant of the Intelligence Service (“Verfassungsschutz”), which closely monitored Amri for months before he drove a large truck into a crowd on December 19.

Amri had been imprisoned in Italy for four years for criminal offenses and was reportedly radicalized while in jail. In 2015, he was released and went to Germany, where he applied unsuccessfully for asylum. According to an investigation by the German television program “Report Munich,” he joined an Islamic network in which at least two spies for the German intelligence service were active.

On Friday evening, the ARD television program “Focus” (“Brennpunkt”) cited a file according to which an “informant” (“VP”) for the North Rhine-Westphalian state criminal office had already made contact with Amri at the end of 2015. “In the ensuing days, Amri stated that he wanted to carry out attacks in Germany using weapons of war (AK 47s, explosives),” the notation reads.

Between February and March of 2016, Amri was driven from Dortmund to Berlin by a “secret informant for the Intelligence Service” to whom he related his plans. The note in the file adds: “He was driven by VP and stated that his mission was to kill on behalf of Allah.”

According to the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, at about the same time, the state criminal agency of North Rhine-Westphalia sent a report on the Islamic network in which Amri was active to the prosecutor’s office in Karlsruhe. The top German criminal prosecutor commenced investigations into Amri on suspicion of support for and membership in a terrorist group. In November, he ordered the arrest of the head of the group, Abu Walaa, as well as other hard-core members.

Amri, however, remained free. Apparently, shortly after Amri had moved to Berlin with the help of agents of the state, the prosecutor’s office handed over his case to the Berlin judiciary and encouraged it to investigate him on suspicion of preparing a major state-threatening act of violence—a lesser form of terrorism. The Berlin public prosecutor’s office then began its own investigation on the suspicion that Amri was merely planning a burglary to obtain money for the purpose of buying weapons.

Amri was subsequently supervised and monitored by the Berlin security authorities until September. Then the surveillance was reportedly stopped, supposedly because there was no evidence pointing to an imminent offence. The authorities in Berlin refrained from arresting him, although they had ample legal authority given the fact that Amri was an asylum-seeker whose application had been rejected and who was suspected of terrorism.

It is totally beyond belief that the failure to arrest Amri was an “accident,” or was due to a lack of legal authority to take him into custody. Even Heribert Prantl, a lawyer who heads the internal affairs department of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, presumed on Friday that Amri was intentionally left alone.

He wrote: “Did the authorities accept the risks associated with Amri because they hoped that their surveillance would provide information? And did the supervising authority say nothing to other authorities because it wanted to keep the knowledge to itself?”

In fact, there are ample grounds to believe that sections of the state apparatus deliberately accepted the risk of such an attack in order to promote their own right-wing agenda. Fierce clashes have taken place in German ruling circles over refugee and security policy. Many regard Chancellor Angela Merkel as too soft to lead the government in times of major international and national tensions and mounting social conflicts. Under these circumstances, the attack is being used to intimidate the population and bring about a political change of course, possibly including a change of government.

The massive and unexplained evidence of state foreknowledge and even protection of the alleged perpetrator of the December 19 Berlin attack conforms to a by-now familiar pattern in regard to major terror attacks internationally. Such was the case in the November, 2015 attacks in Paris, the Boston Marathon bombings in April of 2013, and the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington DC.

In each case, the Islamist forces involved in the attacks were linked either to despotic regimes allied to Washington, such as Saudi Arabia, to militias being used as proxy forces for US imperialism and its European allies in the Middle East, Central Asia and North Africa, or, in the case of the Boston Marathon attack, to CIA-backed Islamist separatists operating within the Russian Federation.

In all of these cases, the perpetrators had long been in the sights of the security forces, which refrained from intervening. In every case, the attacks provided the pretext for a massive buildup of the state apparatus. In France, the Socialist Party government of François Hollande seized on the Paris attacks to impose an indefinite state of emergency, which continues to this day. The Boston attacks were used to impose a martial-law-like lockdown and police-military occupation of a major American city. The September 11 attacks served as justification for the so-called “war on terror,” involving a series of devastating wars in the Middle East and the erection of a surveillance and police state apparatus in the US.

The Berlin attack is now being exploited for similar purposes. Although there is no connection with the refugees who came to Germany last year to escape the imperialist wars in Syria and other countries, and although the German security authorities knew of Amri’s intentions, there is an unceasing drumbeat for a strict policing of borders and the construction of a totalitarian surveillance state.

On Tuesday, Spiegel Online predicted that the conflict “will be even sharper, even more polarizing, even dirtier leading up to the Bundestag (parliamentary) elections in September.” It noted that interior policy experts of all parties are discussing “a more consistent deportation policy, transit centres, video surveillance, and electronic foot-cuffs for Islamic threats.” It stated further that Chancellor Merkel, who has declared she is prepared to stand for election to a fourth term, does not fundamentally oppose these debates, but now “knows she has to deliver.”

Spiegel Online went on to declare that the “humanitarian imperative” was for yesterday. In 2017, Merkel would no longer be the “refugee chancellor,” but rather the security chancellor. She had to embody the “strong state” that she has herself invoked in order to secure support within “her own ranks.”

Similar reactions are being expressed internationally. In France, both the conservative Republicans (LR) and the far-right National Front are calling for the strengthening of borders. The Republicans spokesman Guillaume Larrivé declared: “Merkel’s decision to open up borders has weakened the security of Europe, the whole continent. We need a different immigration policy, another security policy—both in Paris and Berlin.”

The British *Spectator* complained that while the issue at hand was the need to abolish the right to asylum, Germany was still “a prisoner of its past, scarred by the knowledge that the land of Goethe and Beethoven murdered six million Jews.”

The Week described Merkel’s refugee policy as “a disaster.” It wrote: “She said that welcoming this enormous wave of refugees was the only way to be true to ‘European values.’ But the current wave of terrorism and the enormous fear of crime and disorder in European cities is proving mortally dangerous not just to her own party, but to the European Union itself.”



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