

Growing links between German right-wing extremists, police and state government in Saxony

Sven Heymann
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More is becoming known about the background and political connections of the State Criminal Investigation Office (LKA) worker who staged a provocation against a ZDF television reporting team covering a far-right Pegida demonstration in Dresden last Thursday. The camera crew was detained and questioned by the police for 45 minutes following the confrontation, preventing them from reporting on the right-wing demonstration.

The incident throws a spotlight on the close links between the right-wing extremist scene, the police and the Saxony state government coalition of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Social Democratic Party (SPD).

As broadcaster MDR reports, in his capacity as an auditor for serious crimes, the Pegida supporter works on highly sensitive personal records at the Saxony LKA. He has access to the IVO electronic investigation system (Integrated Transaction Processing System), a computer system specially developed by the Saxony police. According to the Saxony police website, the handling of cases is “computer-aided throughout, from the initial police measures to the completion of the procedure and handing over to the competent prosecution agency.” The system was, “at the same time, the central database and offender photo record, as well as the interface to INPOL and the Schengen Information System.”

But that is not all: as MDR further reports, the man also has access rights to the so-called Central Aliens Register ZAR. There is a total of approximately 20 million personal records stored in this registry. According to the Federal Office of Administration website, this has also served as the core data system for refugee management since 2015.

According to MDR, the LKA is also examining possible links between its employee and the right-wing scene in Freital. Shortly after the start of the video showing the events at the demonstration, the LKA/Pegida man can be seen standing next to the well-known Freitaler right-wing extremist René Seyfried, who then also lodged a complaint against the journalists with the police. Seyfried is the initiator of the so-called “Freital Citizens Initiative,” which, under the name “Freital fights back—no to the hotel home,” demonstrated in 2015 against the establishment of a refugee home in a former hotel. Under the slogan “Education instead of Immigration,” Seyfried ran for the mayor's office with the support of the initiative in June 2015.

In spring 2015, the right-wing extremist terrorist group known as the Freital Militia emerged. The group initially patrolled local buses to intimidate supposedly violent foreigners, then called for protests against pro-refugee demonstrations and eventually resorted to increasingly brutal methods.

In June 2015, members of the group pursued and harassed a car of pro-asylum activists and finally smashed the windshield with a baseball bat at a gas station, injuring one of the passengers. In addition, the group launched an attack on the house of an alternative housing project using explosives and butyric acid. It is also believed the group was responsible for an attack on the car of a local Left Party politician.

Police and establishment politicians have done everything possible to downplay the group's terrorist activities; not least because there seem to be links between the police and the right-wing terrorists. For example, during the investigation for the subsequent

trial of the group at the Dresden Higher Regional Court, it became known that one of the leaders was said to have received information from a member of the riot police. This had allowed the terrorists to avoid searches and raids. In addition, the group met regularly at a garage located directly opposite the police station.

In July 2015, after the first attacks, in a reply to a question tabled by the Left Party in the state parliament, the then Saxony State Interior Minister Markus Ulbig (CDU) had declared the Freital Group was not on any watch-list of the Saxony state secret service. The regional authorities had “no knowledge of actual evidence of extremist aspirations” by the group, it was said. Later, the secret service had to concede that it had had contact with at least one member of the terrorist group. In March, eight accused members of the terrorist group were sentenced to prison terms of between four and ten years.

As more and more details about the close links between right-wing extremism and the Saxony state come to light, the media and establishment politicians are playing down the recent events in Dresden, or openly defend the actions of the police. As the Saxony state premier Michael Kretschmer (CDU) had done before, the chairman of the German Police Union, Rainer Wendt, also backed the Saxony police. “The police officers behaved correctly,” said Wendt in the *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung*. The television crew were held for 45 minutes because the journalists and camera operators “dragged things out and did not cooperate.”

The *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote provocatively, “A brief ID check of journalists is permitted, details must be taken by the police. State premier Kretschmer did well to support the Saxony police—what else should he do?” The newspaper railed against “all those so-called federal politicians who now pretended that Saxony was Sierra Leone.” The question remained, “who this nationwide outcry will benefit. Anyone who declares Saxony a police state, where freedom of the press counts for nothing, does not know what he is talking about.”

In fact, it is not only Saxony that increasingly resembles a police state. Throughout Germany, the respective state governments are developing reactionary new police laws that restrict basic democratic rights and strengthen the most right-wing forces in the state apparatus. Above all, the SPD, which

now hypocritically criticizes the actions of the LKA man and the actions of the Saxony police at federal and state level, plays a central role.

By continuing the grand coalition with the Christian Democrats, the Social Democrats have deliberately made the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which received just over 12 percent of the vote in the federal election, the official opposition in the Bundestag (parliament). Far from being an unwanted outcome, this disproportional role for a neo-fascist party serves to create the political climate for the grand coalition’s policies of military rearmament, attacks on democratic rights and social austerity.

Only a few days ago, it became known that the head of the federal secret service, Hans-Georg Maaßen, had met AfD parliamentary deputy Stephan Brandner in June this year for a discussion in his office at the Bundestag. Brandner owes his office as chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Legal Affairs to the Social Democratic Bundestag Vice-President Thomas Oppermann, who had proposed him for a secret election.



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