

German Secret Service denies neo-Nazi violence in Chemnitz

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After thousands of neo-Nazis rampaged through the East German city of Chemnitz late last month, giving Nazi salutes and attacking foreigners, dominant sections of the German state and political establishment have come to the defence of the fascists.

On Friday, the head of the secret service (BfV) Hans-Georg Maaßen, denied that demonstrators had carried out attacks on immigrants and journalists. “I share the scepticism toward media reports about right-wing extremists hunting people down in Chemnitz. The secret service has no reliable information about such actions having taken place,” Maaßen told the tabloid *Bild*.

Referring to a video shared on the Internet and shown on television, documenting an attack by right-wing extremists on two Afghan refugees, Maaßen said, “There is no evidence that the video circulating on the Internet about this alleged incident is authentic.”

He added, “My cautious assessment is that there are good reasons to believe this is targeted misinformation in order to distract the public from the murder in Chemnitz.”

Maaßen's statements are a deliberate political provocation, which aim to strengthen the most right-wing forces in the government and state apparatus. Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (Christian Social Union, CSU), who on Thursday called immigrants “the mother of all political problems,” immediately expressed his “full confidence” in Maaßen.

The leader of the right-wing extremist Alternative for Germany (AfD), Alexander Gauland, who had earlier praised Maaßen as an “objective senior official,” bragged that the Secret Service head had made it clear that “there is no evidence of the harassment of foreigners in Chemnitz.”

In fact, the far-right violence in Chemnitz is well

documented in videos and eyewitness accounts. Independent journalist Johannes Grunert confirmed to *Bild* that he had watched the scenes of the video that Maaßen referred to as “targeted misinformation”.

Broadcasters ARD and ZDF interviewed two Afghan refugees, who are seen on the video, as they are chased by the right-wing protesters. The Dresden state Prosecutor General's Office has now received 120 criminal complaints for breach of the peace, bodily injury, making the Hitler salute (which is illegal in Germany) and similar offences.

By contrast, the circumstances that led to the death of the 35-year-old Cuban-German Daniel H., which has been used as a pretext by the neo-Nazis for violence against refugees, remain unclear. According to the police, “several people of different nationalities” were involved in the dispute during the city festival, during which Daniel H. was stabbed.

An arrest warrant was issued that same night for a 22-year-old Iraqi and a 23-year-old Syrian. This arrest warrant was later passed to the right-wing extremist scene by an official at Dresden Prison.

On Tuesday this week, the Chemnitz district court then issued a third arrest warrant for another Iraqi. The prosecution is investigating all three for joint manslaughter, not murder. When Maaßen talks about “murder” without there being any such charge, let alone a verdict, this raises more questions than the secret service chief might like. Given the way the death of the Cuban-German man was exploited by the far right, and that the young worker had an immigrant background and was politically on the left, the question arises whether right-wing extremists or parts of the state apparatus were involved in his death.

In Saxony, the security services have repeatedly used their close ties with right-wing extremist circles to

pursue reactionary political goals. Above all, the secret service is deeply embedded in the neo-Nazi scene and implicated in right-wing extremist acts of violence.

The neo-Nazi National Socialist Underground (NSU), which killed nine immigrants and one policewoman, contained several dozen undercover informants working with the intelligence services and the police. One official of the Hesse state secret service was even present at the crime scene during a murder. The “Thüringer Heimatschutz” (Thuringia Homeland Security), a neo-Nazi network out of which the NSU recruited, was built with funds provided by the BfV.

Since taking over the leadership of the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, as Germany’s secret service is called, in August 2012, Maaßen has made domestic intelligence an instrument for promoting the extreme right.

Numerous revelations have come to light in recent weeks showing the close collaboration between the secret service and the AfD. In 2015, Maaßen met twice with former AfD chair Frauke Petry, allegedly to give her advice about how the organisation could avoid being placed on a BfV watch list. Later, Maaßen held further meetings with AfD leader Gauland and AfD parliamentarian Stephan Brandner, the chairman of the Bundestag (parliamentary) legal affairs committee.

The current annual secret service report, published at the end of July with a foreword by Interior Minister Seehofer, reads like a document produced at AfD headquarters. While the AfD and its right-wing extremist periphery are mentioned merely as “victims” of supposed “left-wing extremists,” the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) is named as a “left-wing extremist party” and an “object of observation.”

The SGP is not accused of committing any crime; its “offence” is that it publicly advocates a socialist program that “is directed against the existing, capitalist state and social order, against the EU, against alleged (*sic*) nationalism, imperialism and militarism.”

After tens of thousands of people took part in mass protests against the extreme right in Chemnitz and other cities this month, Maaßen and Seehofer are intensifying their offensive. They want to deliberately strengthen the extreme right in order to suppress the growing resistance to militarism, social austerity, increasing state powers and anti-refugee propaganda.

From the standpoint of the secret service and the grand coalition of the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, it is not the neo-Nazis that are the problem, but their opponents.

The political leaders of the Left Party and the Greens have lined up with the right-wing policies of the grand coalition. Although they now feign criticism of Maaßen and make calls for his resignation, they have worked closely with him in recent years. According to official information from the Ministry of the Interior, since taking office, Maaßen has held around 200 discussions with politicians of all parties in the Bundestag. The Left Party invited Maaßen to a public discussion meeting in March 2013 and closed ranks with the secret service. Since then, it has supported the policies of the grand coalition in all key domestic and foreign affairs.

The only social force capable of opposition to the resurgence of the extreme right in Germany is the international working class. The SGP therefore calls for the expansion of demonstrations against the right-wing terror, the establishment of a police state and military rearmament. The demands of the SGP are:

- Stop the conspiracy of the grand coalition, state apparatus and right-wing extremists!
 - No more war! Stop Germany’s return to militarist great power politics!
 - Abolish the secret service and immediately cease monitoring the SGP and other left-wing organizations!
 - Defend the right to asylum! No to increased state powers and surveillance!
 - End poverty and exploitation—for social equality!
- The wealth of the financial oligarchy, the banks and major corporations must be expropriated and placed under democratic control!

The SGP statement, “The fight against fascism in Germany requires a socialist perspective,” which members of the SGP and its youth and student organization IYSSE are distributing widely at protests throughout Germany can be accessed in English here and downloaded as a leaflet in German here .



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