

# The case of Hans-Georg Maassen and the struggle against police-state repression in Germany

Johannes Stern  
8 November 2018

In mid-August, the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) issued a statement protesting its being placed on a blacklist of “left-wing extremist” organizations by Germany’s Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutz, BfV). The statement called for the disbanding of this organization, which is a right-wing hotbed of anti-democratic conspiracies.

This demand is more urgent than ever. The recent revelations surrounding the dismissal of the long-time president of the Verfassungsschutz, Hans-Georg Maassen, confirmed that the German domestic intelligence service has been run by a right-wing extremist since 2012. The trial of the neo-fascist NSU murder gang has already demonstrated how closely the Verfassungsschutz was linked to the Neo-Nazi milieu in Germany.

The wording of the farewell speech given by Maassen at a meeting of European intelligence chiefs in Warsaw on 18 October is virtually identical to the fascist tirades of the far-right Alternative for Germany, AfD. Using the same language as the AfD, Maassen described himself as the “critic of an idealistic, naive and left-wing immigrant and security policy” and once again denied that Neo-Nazi riots had taken place in Chemnitz at the end of August. He asserted that reports of foreigners being “chased” by Neo-Nazis were “fake” and based on “disinformation” and “false information.”

In fact, the violent attacks by right-wing extremist thugs on immigrants, leftists and a Jewish restaurant are well-documented.

Maassen argued that he was the victim of a conspiracy by “left-wing radicals” who wanted to “provoke the break up of this coalition government.” Maassen, who under former Social Democratic interior minister Otto Schily, headed a department in the Interior Ministry, now stands so far to the right that he can even detect “radical leftist

forces” within the Social Democratic Party (SPD).

Even Germany’s current right-wing interior minister, Horst Seehofer (CSU), who had backed Maassen right up to the end, was forced to distance himself: “To speak of radical left-wing forces within the SPD” was “unacceptable”, Seehofer said at a press conference on Monday, when he announced the dismissal of Maassen. “To describe the entire security or immigration policy as naive or leftist”, in his view, was also “going too far”.

Even Germany’s right-wing bourgeois media must now admit that Maassen is a de facto member of the AfD. “The way Maassen cultivated contacts in the political sphere gave the impression that he was a kind of constitutional legal advisor, not least for the AfD,” commented the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* on Tuesday.

And the *Frankfurter Rundschau* wrote: “It raises the question of whether Maassen is the only one in the leadership of the German security authorities who thinks like him—or whether he is merely the tip of an iceberg.” It is quite possible that in future “we will see him in politics, in the Bundestag sitting diagonally behind [AfD leaders] Alexander Gauland or Alice Weidel. But the question remains whether Hans-Georg Maassen says more about the police and intelligence services, than [Social] Democrats care to admit—this question is more urgent than ever.”

The case of Maassen fully confirms the assessment of the SGP. The current BfV report and the decision of the grand coalition to blacklist the SGP are part of a conspiracy in the state apparatus, based on right-wing extremist circles with the aim of establishing a far-right, authoritarian regime in Germany.

The current Verfassungsschutz report, which was elaborated in collaboration with the AfD, evaluates any

left-wing criticism of capitalism and the right-wing politics of all of the established parties as “left-wing extremism” and “anti-constitutional”. “In addition to the AfD, left-wing extremists also blamed the ‘federal government of the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats’ and the Green Party for the tightening of asylum law,” the report reads.

The AfD and its fascist milieu are mentioned in the entire 359-page report merely as victims of alleged “left-wing extremists.” Protests against AfD conferences are cited as examples of “left-wing extremist agitation”. The same applies to the “ongoing ‘struggle’ against right-wing extremists” and the gathering of “information about alleged or actual right-wing extremists and their structures.”

The SGP is listed as a “left-wing extremist party” and as an “object for observation” because it is the only party that systematically fights against the right-wing politics of all the established parties, the grand coalition government’s promotion of the AfD and the return of German militarism and fascism. “The agitation of the SGP is directed in its program against the existing state and social order, as a generalised disparagement of ‘capitalism’, against the EU, against alleged nationalism, imperialism and militarism and against social democracy, the unions and also against the party Die Linke [Left Party]” the report states.

The Verfassungsschutz does not accuse the SGP of any violations of law or violent activities, but rather explicitly states that the party pursues its political goals by legal means. The party “tries to gain public attention for its political ideas by participating in elections and through lectures,” the report reads.

Such statements constitute the foundations for a dictatorship which the federal grand coalition is intent on erecting, even after the dismissal of Maassen. For example, the Verfassungsschutz report remains on display on the website of the Interior Ministry and all the Bundestag parties have indicated that they will continue Maassen’s political course without him.

Interior Minister Seehofer thanked Maassen in his speech on Monday for “his undisputed service in the Interior Ministry and especially as president of the BfV”. The chair of the SPD Bundestag faction, Carsten Schneider, described Maassen’s statements as “somewhat crazy”, but made clear in the same breath that the SPD “would not desert its responsibilities”.

The message is clear: the Social Democrats are responding to their recent election defeats in Bavaria and

Hesse and their historically low poll numbers (13 percent) by maintaining the grand coalition and conspiring behind the scenes with far-right forces.

Thus, for example, the AfD politician Stephan Brandner owes his office as chair of the parliamentary legal committee to the Social Democratic Bundestag Vice President Thomas Oppermann, who proposed that Brandner stand for election. At the Humboldt University in Berlin, Social Democratic university president Sabine Kunst is implementing the policies of the Verfassungsschutz in close cooperation with the AfD, and taking action against left-wing students.

The leading figures in the Left Party and the Greens are also part of this political conspiracy. Green Party deputy Konstantin von Notz has praised Maassen’s successor and his previous deputy in the BfV, Thomas Haldenwang, in the highest tones. “I’m looking forward to working with you,” he said. “I wish the new president a good hand to tackle things with determination and restore lost confidence.”

Left Party leader Dietmar Bartsch complained on Tuesday on ZDF breakfast television that the Interior Minister “did not have his house under control” and should therefore be replaced soon. In other words, the Left Party, which invited Maassen to address one of its meetings in 2013, does not seek the dissolution of the BfV but rather to reorganize it on a more “professional” basis, while continuing to act as loyal adviser and ally of the grand coalition, the country’s security forces and intelligence apparatus.

The SGP is the only party that opposes the grand coalition and the right-wing conspiracy in the state apparatus from the left and fights among workers and youth for an international socialist program. We appeal to all who want to oppose the threat from the right to take action and protest against the BfV report. We demand that the domestic intelligence service cease its observation of the SGP and all other left-wing organizations, and that this hotbed of right-wing intrigue be dissolved.



To contact the WSWs and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**