

# A terrorist network inside the German Army

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For a long time, virtually no one could have imagined that paramilitary networks would again emerge in Germany, closely linked to the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) and the secret services, stockpiling weapons, drawing up death lists of political opponents and being covered up by the state.

In the Weimar Republic, there had been numerous such groups, which murdered hundreds of predominantly left-wing political opponents. The best known was the Consul Organization, also known as the “Black Reichswehr,” which had about 5,000 members.

Emerging from the Ehrhardt Navy Brigade, a *Freikorps* (volunteer corps) involved in the bloody suppression of the November Revolution in 1918, it maintained close contacts with the Reichswehr (Imperial Army), the police and the judiciary. Among its best-known victims were Zentrum party politician Matthias Erzberger and Foreign Minister Walther Rathenau. Later, members of the Consul Organization played a leading role in building Hitler’s SA.

Similar forces are at work in the “Shadow Army inside the Armed Forces” exposed in a report published by the German news magazine *Focus* in its November 10 issue. Based on an investigation of documents from the Federal Prosecutor General’s Office, the magazine describes “a conspiratorial network of about 200 former and active Bundeswehr soldiers”.

“Numerous interrogations”, according to *Focus*, “paint the picture of a conspiratorial troop that is supposed not to shy from the deliberate killing of political opponents. According to the investigators, the elite fighters had also set up secret caches of weapons, ammunition, fuel and food—on the German border with Austria and Switzerland.”

According to *Focus*, one witness told the investigators of the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) that participants, “in their abysmal ‘hatred of the left’ and refugees, had created a ‘file with addresses and photos’ of targets who had to ‘go’.” In the inner circle, “it had been discussed to gather the spied-upon persons and bring them to a certain place ‘where they should be killed’.” According to other testimony, the first targets on the list were Dietmar Bartsch and Sahra Wagenknecht, leaders of the Left Party faction in the Bundestag (parliament).

Investigations against the terrorist cell in the Bundeswehr have been ongoing since April of last year, when Bundeswehr officer Franco A. was arrested on suspicion of terrorism. However, neither the Attorney General’s Office nor the BKA considered it necessary to warn the public. Franco A. is at large again, even though the evidence against him is overwhelming.

The revelations by *Focus* are still being tacitly ignored and hushed up by other media outlets and the establishment political parties. Had the news magazine uncovered a terrorist conspiracy by Islamists or left-wingers, it would dominate the headlines for days on end. The demands for harsher laws would be deafening. But in the face of a conspiracy whose centre lies inside the Bundeswehr, the silence is deafening.

This alone is proof that what is involved is not an isolated case. The right-wing extremist conspiracy is tolerated, covered up and supported by the highest authorities in the state and politics.

According to *Focus*, the core of the conspiratorial network is the Special Forces Unit (KSK), the Bundeswehr’s elite corps. The KSK was founded in the mid-1990s, when Germany was again preparing for international military interventions.

While the combat operations of the Bundeswehr are publicly presented as “peace missions”, the KSK, which is trained in the fight against terrorism and hostage liberation, carries out its dirty work shielded from public eye. The deployments of the 1,100-strong unit are so secret that not even the number and names of fallen soldiers are published. In Afghanistan, the KSK was involved in the massacre at Kunduz, the bloodiest German military operation since the Second World War, which claimed the lives of over 100 civilians.

It has been known for a long time that right-wing radicals are running wild inside the elite unit. As early as 2003, the then KSK commander, Brigadier General Reinhard Günzel, was dismissed for publicly expressing his solidarity with anti-Semitic statements by Christian Democratic Party (CDU) member Martin Hohmann, who now sits in the Bundestag for the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). In lectures

that he subsequently gave to neo-Nazis, Günzel denied the unique character of the Holocaust, attacked the Nuremberg war crimes trials and praised the courage, bravery and sacrifice of German soldiers in the Second World War.

In April of last year, it became known that KSK soldiers had celebrated a farewell party with music by the right-wing extremist band “Sturmwehr” and had given the Hitler salute. Only this week, a civil court sentenced a lieutenant colonel to a fine of 4,000 euros. The Bundeswehr leadership had previously let an internal procedure fizzle out.

The reason for the silence concerning the *Focus* revelations is not that they are suspect. Those responsible in the ministries, political parties and editorial offices are well informed about the radical right-wing activities inside the Bundeswehr and their links to the neo-Nazi scene. They cloak themselves in silence because they are covering up and supporting these machinations.

This was also made clear by social democratic Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier in his speech on the 100th anniversary of the November Revolution. In it he explicitly defended the bloody suppression of the Spartacus uprising, which Friedrich Ebert had organized in close cooperation with the right-wing radical *Freikorps*. There is a direct line from the *Freikorps* to Hitler’s storm troopers.

Just as then, Germany’s rulers, working together with right-wing radical forces, are preparing for the violent suppression of bitter class struggles. The so-called “people’s parties”, which had organised “social peace” in the post-war period, are quickly losing their influence. According to the latest polls, support for the Social Democratic Party (SPD) stands at only 13 percent. The growing gulf between rich and poor, rising rents and unbearable working conditions are turning more and more people against the capitalist system. The proposals for building a German or European army that can compete with the USA, Russia and China, cannot be achieved by democratic means.

“The excessively high tension of the international struggle and the class struggle results in the short circuit of the dictatorship,” wrote Leon Trotsky in 1929, “blowing out the fuses of democracy one after the other.” This is being confirmed again today. This is the reason why the ruling class is returning to the methods of rule of the Weimar Republic, tolerating and encouraging right-wing conspiracies and, especially in refugee policy, adopting the program of the far-right AfD.

A witness quoted by *Focus* told the BKA investigators that the terrorist network in the Bundeswehr was preparing itself for a “Day X” in general staff terms. Day X was a “time of extreme crisis”, a “collapse of public order”, which “the police face helplessly”. In other words, it is preparing for the suppression of a social uprising.

Back in the summer, in its annual report, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV), as the German secret service is called, for the first time listed the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) as a “left-wing extremist party” and as an object of observation, thus preparing a possible ban. The only justification it gave was that the SGP had a socialist programme, criticised capitalism and rejected the establishment parties and trade unions. The report was closely coordinated with representatives of the AfD and was the responsibility of the then head of the BfV Hans-Georg Maaßen, who now openly advocates right-wing extremist positions.

This is part of an international phenomenon. Everywhere, the ruling class is turning to right-wing and fascist forces in anticipation of fierce class struggles. In Warsaw, the ruling party PIS celebrated the hundredth anniversary of Polish independence side by side with neo-Nazis. In the USA, President Trump is seeking to build up a fascist movement with his virulent agitation against migrants and refugees. In France, President Macron praises the dictator and Nazi collaborator Marshal Pétain.

All those who reject a return to unrestrained exploitation, war and fascism must take this as a warning. The alternatives today are not socialist revolution or capitalist reform, but socialist revolution or barbarism. Only an independent intervention of the working class based on a socialist program can prevent the relapse into war and fascism. This is what the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) and the International Committee of the Fourth International are fighting for.



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