

Neo-Nazi network in the German police force

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The neo-Nazi network in the police of the German state of Hesse is larger than previously known. So far, there have been investigations against four policemen and a policewoman from downtown Frankfurt, who exchanged neo-Nazi symbols in a chat group and are suspected of being responsible for a threatening letter to the lawyer Seda Basay-Yildiz.

The lawyer, who defended victims of the neo-Nazi terror group NSU as well as the Islamist Sami A., who was illegally deported to Tunisia, was insulted with racist slurs, and her two-year-old daughter was threatened with being “slaughtered” in the fax, which was signed “NSU 2.0”.

Now the German daily *FAZ* reports that a police station in the district of Marburg-Biedenkopf has also been searched in connection with the neo-Nazi network, and that there are further suspected cases in other stations, which are being examined internally by the police. Irene Mihalic, the Green Party's spokeswoman for internal affairs in the Bundestag and a former policewoman, is calling for an investigation into whether the policemen have established a nationwide network with like-minded people.

Meanwhile, politicians of all stripes are hypocritically feigning surprise and indignation, as if this is an exceptional single case, and are trying to play down the significance of the events.

Peter Beuth (CDU), the Hessian Minister of the Interior responsible for the police, asserts that “misconduct of any kind, regardless of who commits it, will be severely punished”. Mathias Middelberg, a CDU member of the Bundestag, warns against placing the police under “general suspicion”. “Our police are just as little blind on the right eye as they are on the left,” he said. He was sure that the competent authorities were pursuing the worrying allegations.

Bundestag member Omid Nouripour of the Greens, who govern Hesse in coalition with the CDU, also defended the police. He warned against “prejudgment.” “The work of thousands of policemen, who often work far beyond the limits of their duties, must not be brought into disrepute.”

In fact, the existence of right-wing extremist terrorist structures within the police—as well as the military and the security apparatus—is well known. It was only in November that the news magazine *Focus* revealed that the terror cell around Bundeswehr lieutenant Franco A. consists of around 200 former and active Bundeswehr soldiers and extends into the

Special Forces Command (KSK) and the Military Counter-Intelligence Service (MAD).

The right-wing radical networks, however, are systematically covered up, glossed over and promoted by the responsible politicians, superiors and courts. Here are just a few of many examples of right-wing extremism in the police:

- The Berlin police commissioner Andreas T. had a swastika, the SS victory rune and the notes of the Horst-Wessel-Lied tattooed on his upper body, and had framed photos of Adolf Hitler and Rudolf Hess hanging in his apartment. He was suspended from service in 2007, but continued to receive his full salary for another ten years because the Administrative Court and the Higher Administrative Court decided that he had not violated his duties as a civil servant.

- The Berlin police officer and state protector Edmund H. got away with a fine of 2750 euros and was allowed to stay on duty after sending Christmas greetings with swastikas, Adolf Hitler in Santa costume, the slogans “Ho-Ho-Holocaust” and “Sieg-Heil,” as well as a swastika flag, to 21 colleagues in 2014.

- In the immediate milieu of the National Socialist Underground (NSU), which murdered nine migrants and a police officer between 2000 and 2007, there were at least two dozen informants from the secret service and the police, whose roles were never clarified and who were not even allowed to testify in court. When Halit Yozgat was murdered in an internet café in Kassel, an employee of the Hessian secret service, Andreas Temme, was present. He was protected by Volker Bouffier (CDU), then Hessian Minister of the Interior and now Prime Minister.

- When the Cologne police systematically conducted racial profiling one year after the exaggerated scandal of the Cologne New Year's Eve 2015/16, and randomly detained and checked foreign-looking men, *jetzt*, the online youth magazine of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, published a long interview with a critical policeman who drew a devastating picture of the rampant racism and propensity to violence among the police.

The escalation at the G20 demonstration “Welcome to Hell” in Hamburg was “a deliberately provoked excess of violence”, also by the police, said the policeman. The then-mayor of Hamburg and current vice-chancellor Olaf Scholz (SPD) now “stands up and says that there was no police violence”; but this is “ignorant”. The 30 investigations against police that were finally initiated are “totally disproportionate to the actual

number of illegal assaults” by the police.

The clashes provoked by the police during the G20 summit formed the basis for a systematic smear campaign against “left-wing extremists” and for draconian punishments against young people who did nothing more than exercise their right to demonstrate.

- Rafael Behr, professor of police science at the Police Academy in Hamburg, has confirmed the anonymous statements of the police officer and explained why such conditions usually remain hidden. According to Behr, if the policeman who made the statement had revealed his identity, he himself would have been accused. He would have had to reckon with a libel suit—the civil service law forbids the disclosure of internal information that damages the reputation of the police. He also would have been hounded out of the police force. “Betrayal of comrades is a mortal sin.”

- Although there are no official statistics because elections are by secret ballot, numerous indications show that an above-average number of police officers vote for the AfD. There are also numerous police officers among the functionaries and deputies of the extreme right-wing party.

The chairman of the AfD parliamentary group in the Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania state parliament, Nikolaus Kramer, was a police superintendent. He is a member of the nationalist fraternity Gothia and supports the actions of the Identitarian movement. In the summer of 2017 he shared a photo of the Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler with the inscription “A black block is not always bad”, in an internal AfD chat.

In Thuringia, Ringo Mühlmann, press spokesman for the State Criminal Police Office (LKA), has been a member of the AfD state executive for two years. Dietmar Gedig, police commissioner in Solingen, is deputy state chairman of the Junge Alternative in North Rhine-Westphalia. He caused a scandal when he described Chancellor Merkel as “insane” and “criminal”.

This list could be continued indefinitely.

The strong far right tendencies within the police and the massive presence of the police within the AfD cannot be explained by individual motives, such as the inclination of policemen to law and order policies. They are systematically promoted and covered up by politicians, the media and the state, because the ruling class is returning to the methods of rule of the 1930s in the face of growing social tensions, international conflicts and economic upheavals. It knows no other answer to the increase in class struggle than repression and dictatorship; it knows no other answer to global rivalries than militarism and war.

This is an international phenomenon. In the US, President Trump had the army march on the Mexican border against defenceless refugees. In France, President Macron has deployed 90,000 heavily armed policemen against the Yellow Vest protests. In nine European countries, the right-wing extremists are already in government, while in France and Germany they

are the largest opposition party. In Turkey, Egypt, Russia and many other countries, political repression is taking on increasingly brutal forms.

Christoph Vandreier, deputy chairman of the Socialist Equality Party (SGP), in the book “Warum sind sie wieder da?” (Why are they back?), has carefully traced how this shift to the right was ideologically and politically prepared at universities, in the media and in the political parties. The SGP and its youth organisation, the IYSSE, which have uncovered these machinations and mobilized against them, have themselves come into the crosshairs of the secret service and neo-Nazi networks.

Last Tuesday, right-wing radicals disrupted an IYSSE meeting at Humboldt University in Berlin. Among the troublemakers were members of the AfD youth organization, the Identitarian Movement and the Gothia fraternity. The right-wing mob was incited by the extreme right-wing Humboldt Professor Jörg Baberowski.

The vast majority of the population reacts to the shift to the right with disgust and rejection. Only two days after the attack on the IYSSE, the student parliament (StuPa) of the HU unanimously passed a Resolution condemning the attack by right-wing extremists on the IYSSE meeting.

But in the parties represented in the Bundestag, the massive opposition to the right does not find the slightest expression. The response of the head of the secret service, Hans-Georg Maassen, to the NSU scandal and the open support for a right-wing extremist march in Chemnitz, is to centralize and strengthen the secret service; the response to the neo-Nazi network in the police force is to call for even more police. This also applies to the Left Party.

The fight against the right-wing danger, the defence of democratic and social rights, and the fight against militarism are inseparable. They require an independent movement of the international working class against capitalism, the cause of the social crisis.

The objective conditions for such a movement are developing rapidly, as shown by the increase in labour disputes and protests around the world. But it needs a program, a socialist perspective and leadership. That means building the SGP and sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International around the world.



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