

Germany: Links found between right-wing network inside army and police officer murdered by far-right terrorists

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From one week to the next, the extent of the right-wing extremist network inside the German intelligence services, the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces), police and state authorities becomes ever clearer.

Recently, Berlin's *taz* newspaper exposed the right-wing terrorist network around former Bundeswehr lieutenant Franco A. and the "Uniter" association of former elite soldiers. The authors also came across links to police officer Michèle Kiesewetter, who was murdered on April 25, 2007, allegedly as the tenth victim of the neo-Nazi National Socialist underground (NSU).

In November 2018, *Focus* magazine and *taz* first reported on a terrorist network of soldiers, police officers and intelligence agents planning to assassinate political opponents and stage a fascist coup on "Day X." To this end, an infrastructure of "safe houses," secret chat groups, warehouses and weapons' depots was set up in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Driven by "hatred for left-wingers," secret plans had been developed to "arrest left-wing politicians and kill them in designated places."

The personnel and organization on which the network based itself was the "Uniter" association of former soldiers and the Special Forces Command (KSK), the elite unit of the Bundeswehr. It maintained symbiotic relations with other parts of the German state apparatus, elements of the Military Counterintelligence Service (MAD), members of the secret services, and also reservists, police officers, judges and other civil servants.

The KSK was established in the mid-1990s, when Germany was again preparing for international war missions. The 1,100-strong elite force takes no prisoners. In Afghanistan, it was involved in the Kunduz massacre.

The KSK is obviously awash with right-wing extremists. Lieutenant Colonel Daniel K., who according to broadcaster *Deutsche Welle* was instrumental in founding and establishing the KSK, has since been suspended. In telephone conversations, he is said to have declared that the state was no longer in control of the situation due to the influx of refugees, so "the army must now take matters into its own hands."

The "Uniter" association was founded in 2012 by KSK

soldier André S., nicknamed Hannibal. According to *taz*, the Uniter founder was also a source and respondent for the German military intelligence service MAD for a long period of time.

The right-wing extremist Bundeswehr soldier Franco A. is said to have participated at least twice in meetings in Baden-Württemberg organized by Hannibal. Franco A. made headlines in 2017 because he had registered as a Syrian refugee while working as a Bundeswehr officer. Together with two other accomplices—Maximilian T. and Mathias F.—he apparently planned attacks on high-ranking politicians and personalities, which he then would blame on refugees.

"Uniter" was training right-wing extremists in its own combat unit called the "Defence Corps." In summer 2018, "Uniter" had organized a training session in Mosbach in Baden-Württemberg, where Hannibal trained men in dealing with weapons "in combat situations." According to witnesses, the training session was equivalent to paramilitary training.

"Uniter" also offers its services abroad. In February 2019, for example, it offered to provide military training to police officers and soldiers loyal to right-wing President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines.

"Uniter" maintains close connections with elements in Austria. As Vienna's *Der Standard* reported on March 15, the club was, until a few weeks ago, part of a pseudo-"knightly" order called the Lazarus Union (Corps Saint Lazarus International), which has its base in an old castle near Vienna.

The Vice President of the Lazarus Union, according to the association register, is "Uniter" founder André S.. The Lazarus Union has special advisory status with the United Nations and is internationally active in connection with UN mandates, according to a press release from the Swiss branch of "Uniter."

André S. also appeared two weeks ago at the Enforcetek weapons fair in Nuremberg, reports *Der Standard*—at the booth of an Austrian company, the High Profile Protection GmbH from Carinthia. Under the name "Tacticalbros," this in turn links on Facebook again and again to "Uniter." "Tacticalbros" offers weapons as well as "training," such as "for snipers and spotters." According to the description, the "trainers" are

veterans of special forces and NATO.

In the meantime, *taz* has discovered a direct connection between “Uniter” and the Baden-Württemberg state secret service branch (LfV), as well as an indirect connection to the NSU. When André S. founded “Uniter” in Stuttgart in May 2016, a man named Ringo M. was also involved. At that time, Ringo M. was a serving police officer, and according to *taz*, an employee of the Baden-Württemberg state secret service since 2015.

Ten years earlier, in 2005, Ringo M., had become a member of the then newly created BFE 523 evidence-gathering and arrest unit of the riot police in Böblingen. Many right-wing extremists were obviously involved in this 50-member special unit, which was dissolved in 2014. There were colleagues, *taz* quoted a police officer, “who listened to the music of right-wing bands, they were mainly colleagues from the East.”

Two members of the BFE 523 were also members of the German offshoot of the Ku Klux Klan, which was co-founded by the secret service Confidential Informant (CI) Thomas Richter. Under the cover name “Corelli,” Richter had spent years around the NSU terrorists before he died under mysterious circumstances in 2014.

Chief of the BFE 523 was then police chief commissioner Thomas B., a trained sniper. Today, together with a firm of former special unit police officers, he advises companies that want to send employees to unstable countries, such as Libya. Years ago, under Muammar Gaddafi, the two had trained soldiers in close combat in Libya.

At the time, Michèle Kiesewetter was also a member of BFE 523. The young police officer was reportedly shot dead by the NSU in Heilbronn in April 2007. However, the motive for and the exact facts of the killing remain unclear to this day.

It is known that the NSU murders took place under the eyes of the secret services. Several dozen intelligence officers were active in the immediate periphery of the NSU and it cannot be ruled out that an NSU member worked for one of the intelligence agencies, although *taz* writes that it has so far found “no connection between Hannibal’s shadow network and the NSU perpetrators.” The Thuringia state legislature committee of inquiry into the NSU has summoned Ringo M. to a hearing in April.

The connections of the far-right network extend into the Bundestag (federal parliament). Martin Hess, a parliamentary deputy for the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), who sits on the Domestic Affairs Committee, was formerly a BFE 523 instructor. And AfD deputy Jan Nolte, who sits on the Defence Committee, employs Maximilian T., the accomplice of Franco A., as a personal representative.

According to research by weekly *Die Zeit*, the AfD parliamentary group employs at least 27 activists and supporters of right-wing organizations. *Die Zeit* speaks of a “Nazi network inside the German Bundestag.”

The intelligence services cover up for the far-right by

pretending ignorance or withholding information. For example, members of the parliamentary Defence Committee who asked the intelligence agencies for information on “Uniter” at the end of January received nothing. The representative of the foreign secret service (BND) claimed the organisation had no knowledge of an association that offered international paramilitary training. Neither MAD nor the domestic secret service allegedly knew what the “Defence Corps” of “Uniter” was.

However, research by *taz* has revealed that the Baden-Württemberg state secret service has at least one informant inside “Uniter.” Franco A’s contact man at MAD has also been charged because he is said to have warned the former in 2017 of an imminent raid on the KSK base in Calw in southwestern Germany.

Links between the state apparatus and far-right terrorist groups are well documented in German history. In the 1920s and 30s in the Weimar Republic, there were numerous groups that murdered hundreds, mainly left-wing political opponents. The best known was the Consul organization, also called the “Black Reichswehr.”

After the Second World War, the US intelligence agencies then set up “stay-behind troops” with the help of old Nazis, who were also to assassinate left-wing and Social Democratic politicians in the event of a Soviet attack. In the early 1950s, these troops were assigned to the BND under its boss Reinhard Gehlen, who had been responsible for espionage in the East under the Nazis. The secret troop is said to have been dissolved in autumn 1991.

Now these old structures are being revived, as, on the one hand, Germany seeks to act as a major military power worldwide. On the other, the ruling class is reacting to growing popular opposition to militarism and war, to social inequality and to the building of a police state by promoting right-wing extremists and fascists.



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