

Germany: Following the murder of politician Walter Lübcke—the call for a strong state

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Following the assassination of Kassel's district president Walter Lübcke (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) by a notorious neo-Nazi, representatives of all the parliamentary parties are calling for a stronger state. Although it is becoming increasingly clear that the suspect, Stephan Ernst, did not act alone, but as part of a comprehensive neo-Nazi network that stretches deep into the state apparatus, they are calling for a massive stepping up of the powers of the very security agencies that are closely linked with the terrorist networks.

In an interview with the *Passauer Neue Presse*, Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (Christian Social Union, CSU) demanded that "our security authorities continue to be strengthened in personnel and equipment. The secret service must be expanded." It was not just about "looking at individuals in the extremist and terrorist areas, but also exposing the connections to networks." For this one needed "more personnel" and the "analysis capacities of the security authorities" must be increased.

Above all, Seehofer wants to step up the monitoring and censorship of the internet by the German domestic intelligence service. "The exchange of information and the preparation of acts of violence ... today often occurs over the internet. We need to get better monitoring tools to detect the perpetrators digitally with the same intensity as in the analogue world, such as with telephone surveillance. We lack sufficient staff and the necessary powers for the secret service."

What Seehofer has in mind is a surveillance and police state. The laws being prepared by the Interior Ministry will eliminate "the remaining restrictions on the activities of the secret services, which were anchored in the constitution and laws of the Federal Republic after the terror of the Third Reich," as we wrote in an earlier article.

For example, the current draft bill not only abrogates elementary basic rights such as postal and telecommunications secrecy, and the inviolability of the home, but even allows the secret service to spy digitally on journalists and media outlets. Among other things, the secret service is to be officially permitted to hack the servers, computers and smartphones of publishers, broadcasters and freelance journalists.

The Lübcke murder is being used by the grand coalition of the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) and Social Democrats (SPD) to advance its reactionary plans and suppress any criticism. In the "question time" called by the CDU/CSU and SPD last Thursday in the Bundestag (parliament), Seehofer said that "we should not

superficially say again ... we wanted a surveillance state, if we want to protect our state, we wanted to restrict civil rights, we wanted to bug journalists." Instead, "we should all stand together and give the security agencies the powers to fight and prevent capital crimes, which are becoming increasingly complex and worse."

As a last resort, the interior ministry plans to deprive extremists of their basic rights. "We are the constitutional department. We will seriously consider the possibilities," Seehofer recently commented on a similar move by former CDU General Secretary Peter Tauber, who is currently working as parliamentary secretary of state in the Ministry of Defence. In a guest contribution in *Die Welt*, Tauber had demanded all those who "fight the free-democratic basic order" have their fundamental rights denied, based on Article 18 of the constitution.

Since Lübcke's murder has provoked horror and encounters enormous opposition among workers and youth in Germany and internationally, the ruling class is justifying its authoritarian measures in the name of the "fight against the right-wing." Tauber's comment was titled "This enemy is on the right."

But nobody should be fooled by that. As in the Weimar Republic, granting increased powers to the right-wing state apparatus will serve to intensify its actions against the "left" and to intimidate and oppress the widespread opposition to the return of militarism and fascism.

This is exemplified by the latest report by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, as Germany's secret service is called, commissioned by the grand coalition, and which was published last Thursday by Seehofer and the incumbent secret service President Thomas Haldenwang. The stated goal of the secret service and interior ministry is the criminalization and prosecution of socialist parties.

Once again, the report describes the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) as a "left-wing extremist party" and "object of surveillance." The reason given for this by the secret service, as in its last report, is simply the SGP's political opposition to "the existing—generally denigrated as 'capitalism'—state and social order, against the EU, against alleged nationalism, imperialism and militarism and against social democracy, the unions and also against the party Die Linke [Left Party]."

At the same time, the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), which has an openly fascist wing and close links to right-wing

terrorists and violent neo-Nazis, is again depicted merely as the “victim” of alleged “left-wing extremists.” The report states: “In addition to members of right-wing extremist parties in 2018, the Alternative for Germany (AfD), sweepingly declared by left-wing extremists as right-wing extremist, like the ‘Identitarian Movement Germany’ ... in the focus of left-wing extremist agitation.”

In its report, the secret service also systematically hides the broad right-wing terrorist networks inside the police and Bundeswehr (armed forces). One searches in vain for references to right-wing extremist Army officer Franco A. or NSU 2.0 (a far-right cell in the police in Frankfurt, whose name is a reference to the neo-Nazi National Socialist Underground terrorist group). The terrorist group Revolution Chemnitz, which in addition to attacking foreigners and political dissenters had planned an armed “action” and a right-wing revolution on the Day of German Unity in 2018, was trivialized by the secret service as “a citizen militia,” in which it only sees “indications towards right-wing terrorism.”

The far-right terrorist network “Combat 18,” which maintained close ties to the NSU and with which the alleged Lübcke murderer Stephan Ernst was in close contact, is not even mentioned in the new secret service report.

All this does not come as a surprise. It has long been known that the secret service is deeply rooted in the far-right swamp and is involved in right-wing extremist acts of violence. For example, several dozen Confidential Informants operated by the intelligence services and the police were active in the immediate periphery of the NSU, which killed nine immigrants and one policewoman. One official of the Hesse state secret service was even present at the crime scene during a murder. The Thuringia Homeland Security, out of which the NSU recruited support, was demonstrably built with funds provided by the secret service.

Since then, the neo-fascist conspiracy in the state apparatus continues to draw wider circles. In recent years, it became clear that there are extensive terrorist networks in the Bundeswehr and the police, which are hoarding weapons, creating death lists and preparing a fascist coup for a “Day X.”

In addition, many members of the police, the secret service and the Bundeswehr are supporters of the AfD, vote for them or even sit in federal and state parliaments for them. The secret service itself was for many years headed by Hans-Georg Maassen, a supporter of the right-wing extremist party. Since his enforced retirement last November by Seehofer, after he denied right-wing riots had happened in Chemnitz and his bluster about “left-wing forces within the SPD,” the right-wing CDU man is campaigning for government coalitions with the AfD.

The SPD, Left Party and Greens are responding to the neo-fascist conspiracy in the state apparatus by unconditionally backing the security authorities and aggressively defending them against criticism. The deputy SPD parliamentary group leader Eva Högl applauded Seehofer’s speech in the Bundestag and declared, “It is correct and good, how the security authorities are acting now, and that the Federal Public Prosecutor, unlike the NSU murder series at that time, immediately took over the investigation.” There were “many consequences drawn” and there was “a very different approach and cooperation.”

The Green Party deputy leader Konstantin von Notz said, “It’s good to visit joint intelligence centres, but we need a task force that now, immediately, is analysing and remedying deficits, bringing together expertise and supporting and assisting those affected by right-wing hatred and terror, ladies and gentlemen.”

Regarding the extreme right-wing tendencies in the state apparatus, these were “trite generalisations,” Notz continued. Of course, there were “worrying cases of right-wing extremism, including in the German security agencies.” However, anyone who “states sweepingly that the majority in the police and Bundeswehr deviate from the free-democratic basic order and are turning towards a party under surveillance by the secret service is being counter-productive.” This was “outrageous and factually wrong.”

André Hahn from the Left Party, who like Notz sits in the parliamentary Control Committee and thus has close ties to the intelligence services, sang from the same hymn sheet. Of course, there were “always new reports about right-wing tendencies in the security authorities in Germany, and indeed those that have access to firearms.” But at the same time, there was “no doubt: the vast majority of police officers and soldiers do their duty and are committed to democratic principles.”

To paraphrase Leon Trotsky: the SPD, Left Party and Greens fear the growing opposition among workers and youth more than the fascist threat. For this reason, they act in solidarity with the state apparatus and the security authorities. These should be strengthened to suppress an independent movement of the working class against militarism, social cuts and the rise of the right.

The SGP is the only party to call the right-wing conspiracy by its name, to reject massive increases in state powers and which does not allow itself to be intimidated. It has taken legal action against the secret service and appeals to the only social force that can stop the return of the ruling class to fascism, militarism and war—the German, European and international working class.



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