

Germany: Racist assassination attempt on Eritrean man

Marianne Arens

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On Monday, July 22, a man from Eritrea was gunned down on the street and seriously wounded in the town of Wächtersbach in the state of Hesse. On Tuesday, around 500 people gathered at the scene to hold a vigil and express their horror over the act. Just a few weeks ago, a neo-Nazi executed the politician Walter Lübcke in nearby Kassel.

The assassin in Wächtersbach, 55-year-old Roland K., had evidently sought out a victim with dark skin. He fired several shots at the Eritrean from his car and then drove away after hitting his target. A short time afterwards the shooter was found dead in his car. Apparently he had shot himself in the head.

The Eritrean survived the attack but with serious wounds. Workers at a nearby facility heard the gunfire and immediately called an ambulance. The 26-year-old man had been shot in the stomach and required an emergency operation. He has a wife and a child and had been living in Hesse for seven years. He had a permanent job and was also continuing his education. He was on the way to his education facility when he was struck down by Roland K.

The perpetrator of the attack is a known racist. According to information from the local radio station, he had boasted in his local bar "Zum Martinseck" that he was planning "to kill a refugee now." He then drove eight kilometres to Wächtersbach and sought out the local integration office for refugees for a victim. A little later, Roland K. returned to the bar and boasted of his act. At 4:15 pm he was found dead in his car 200 metres away from the pub.

According to the prosecutor general's office, Roland K. committed suicide. He was a trained butcher and truck driver, who was unemployed and living on Hartz IV social welfare. Police found two pistols in his auto and three more weapons, a pistol and two rifles, plus

1,000 rounds of ammunition in his apartment. He had drafted a suicide letter found in his apartment, but the authorities have so far refused to release its content.

Undoubtedly, the man had a "right-wing extremist or far right nationalist orientation," declared Alexander Badle, a spokesman for the Frankfurt attorney general. He quickly added that there was "no reliable valid evidence that (the perpetrator) had contact to the right-wing or right-wing extremist milieu." In the case of the murder of the conservative politician Lübcke the authorities also claimed for a long time that there was no evidence the assassin had "connections to far-right circles."

In fact, evidence of links to neo-Nazi circles in the latest shooting is manifest. Objects associated with the far right were found in the apartment of Roland K and a neighbour told local media "he threatened to shoot someone on several occasions ... and he was definitely a right-wing extremist."

A report in *Stern* magazine drew attention to the apparent acceptance of the racist bragging of Roland K. by guests and the landlord of "Zum Martinseck." The magazine writes: "Even the landlord is apparently closer to far-right thinking than he let on in front of camera. On his Facebook page, he shared Reichsbürger propaganda and content from the NPD." Both the Reichsbürger and the German Democratic Party (NPD) are far-right organisations.

The attempted assassination took place on the same day as fascist bomb threats were made against the party headquarters of the Left Party. The TV journalist Georg Restle also received death threats. The *Tagesspiegel* reported that the authorities are checking links between this latest shooting and the shooting of young people in Norway carried out by the neo-fascist Anders Breivik. Seven years ago, on the same date, July 22, Breivik

killed 77 people.

Speaking on behalf of the Hessian state government, Michael Bußer promised the administration would make “all information available.” A similar pledge was made by the Green Party, which governs the state in a coalition with the conservative CDU.

The roots of the cowardly assassination attempt in Wächtersbach are evident. It is the result of a xenophobic campaign that reaches into the highest government circles. It was the current German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (CSU) who declared that immigration was the “mother of all problems.” He also declared that the ruling federal coalition would resist “to the last cartridge any immigration into the German social system.” Seehofer made this last pronouncement back in 2011. More recently Seehofer stated that if he had not been a minister he would have marched alongside the Nazis who rioted and demonstrated in Chemnitz last year.

Seehofer is not an isolated case in the federal government, a coalition of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Christian Social Union (CSU), and Social Democratic Party, (SPD). The government is increasingly openly taking up the policies of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) and thereby promoting far right ideology and activities.

Recently the coalition agreed to a “Law of Orderly Return,” which accelerates the process of deportations and expands the system of inhumane “anchor centres,” i.e., internment camps for refugees. In its latest report, Germany’s domestic intelligence agency (Office for Constitutional Protection, BfV) once again singled out the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) for surveillance as “left-wing extremist,” while completely failing to mention such far-right active terrorist networks as Combat 18.

The lurch to the right by the state organs and its devastating consequences are increasingly coming to light. Hajo Funke, a consultant in the Hessian committee investigating the activities of the far-right National Socialist Underground, told the newspaper *Hessenschau* that the Wächtersbach assassination attempt made clear that “Inhibitions have diminished in the wake of agitation at an official level.”

Funke laid blame on the AfD and the far right Pegida movement, but also stressed that the biggest problem in Hesse was the fact that the police and the BfV had “not

provided complete and full information.” He referred to the investigation files on the NSU murder in Kassel, which were initially to be locked away for 120 years, and are now only to be made available after 30 years. This measure was agreed by the state’s Interior Minister Peter Beuth (CDU) and state premier Volker Bouffier (CDU), who was Hessian Interior Minister at the time of the NSU murder of Halit Yozgat.



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