

The growing fascist influence in German politics: The case of Christian Democratic politician Robert Möritz

Gregor Link and Johannes Stern
7 January 2020

At the end of last year, the case of former Christian Democratic Union (CDU) politician Robert Möritz, an avowed neo-Nazi, highlighted the sharp shift to the right of the ruling class in Germany.

Seventy-five years after the end of the Second World War and the horrors of the Third Reich, open fascists are operating within one of Germany's ruling parties. They are defended by leading media representatives and politicians at the state and federal level. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Greens, which together with the CDU form the state government in Saxony-Anhalt, are not opponents but part of the shift to the right.

Möritz, who first stood on the CDU list in the Lößnitz an der Linde local elections last spring and won a seat on the local council, had been a member of the CDU youth organisation Junge Union since around August 2018. He had also been on the executive board of the CDU Anhalt-Bitterfeld district association since October of the same year. Möritz is a well-known neo-Nazi who has never made a secret of his fascist convictions and his milieu, even as a member of the CDU. His right-wing extremist activities are well documented.

A YouTube video published more than eight years ago shows Möritz as a steward and participant in a demonstration together with Enrico Marx and Jens Bauer, two close allies of Ralf Wohlleben, a supporter of the neo-Nazi terrorist group National Socialist Underground (NSU).

A Facebook photo from 2015 clearly shows that Möritz has the “Black Sun”—a Nazi symbol consisting of three swastikas placed one on top of the other—as a tattoo on his forearm. In a photo taken on December 6 of last year, the local politician, with a Uniter badge on his arm, can be seen holding the Uniter association's banner (cross, sword and laurels) in front of the camera.

The Uniter association, which disguises itself as an aid organisation for members of elite units of the German armed forces, the police and private security services, is suspected of being the linchpin of the extreme right-wing “Hannibal network.” Its members include reservists, police officers, members of special forces, judges, secret service employees and other German security agencies who are preparing to carry out a fascist coup on “Day X,” hoarding weapons and planning the targeted murder of political opponents.

The founder of Uniter, André S. (pseudonym Hannibal), had personally met several times in the past with the right-wing extremist Bundeswehr officer Franco A., who is now on trial for the “preparation of a serious criminal offence that endangers the state.” Franco A. is accused of plotting assassination attempts on left-wing politicians, cultural workers and institutions while using a fake refugee identity.

Although Möritz, as a member of the CDU, was apparently also active in this right-wing extremist terror milieu, he was protected and aggressively defended by party colleagues until he resigned on December 20. For example, the CDU secretary general in Saxony-Anhalt, Sven Schulze, claimed that Möritz had “credibly” distanced himself from the right-wing extremist scene and terminated his membership in Uniter. Holger Stahlknecht, the CDU state chairman, said that Möritz “deserved a second chance.”

The Greens, who had criticised Möritz on Twitter, were threatened by the CDU with terminating the coalition. Schulze called a tweet from the Green Party (“How many swastikas have a place in the CDU?”) “unacceptable.” If there was no “immediate apology ... a continuation of the coalition is hardly conceivable.”

The Greens, who have been ruling Saxony-Anhalt

together with the CDU and SPD since 2016, hastened to make it clear that they had no intention of leaving the government at any time. “As Greens, we have not questioned the coalition,” state leader Striegel assured the German Press Agency. “We have a coalition agreement; we want to work it through.”

In other words, the Greens, like the SPD, are prepared to push through the right-wing government programme—the coalition agreement provides for a massive stepping up of the powers of the police and secret services as well as attacks on refugees (“consistent deportations”)—also in cooperation with openly extreme right-wing forces.

Behind the criticism of the CDU by the Greens and SPD is above all the concern that the Möritz case has revealed how far to the right the ruling class stands.

In the case of the coalition in Saxony-Anhalt, this has long been obvious. In June, the deputy chairmen of the CDU state parliamentary group, Ulrich Thomas and Lars-Jörn Zimmer, had published a memorandum calling for an alternative coalition government with the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), on the basis of an explicitly right-wing extremist programme. We must “again succeed in reconciling the social with the national,” it says. “The longing for Heimat [homeland] and national identity” must be countered “by a clear demarcation against the multicultural currents of left-wing parties and groups.”

In November, Stahlknecht and the Saxony-Anhalt CDU then wanted to appoint the chairman of the police union, Rainer Wendt, as a state secretary. Wendt is a figurehead of the AfD and a supporter of the former president of the secret service, Hans-Georg Maassen, who wants to ban socialist parties and left-wing ideas in Germany and openly advocates fascist positions.

The CDU, in which many old Nazis found their new political home after the fall of the Third Reich and the banning of the NSDAP, is today once again a reservoir for right-wing extremist forces. Even numerous bourgeois media have commented that Möritz is “no isolated case.”

As the *Tagesspiegel* reported, there are “many overlaps” between Uniter and the CDU in east Germany. For example, founding member Theo Schöpfel, a CDU city councillor from the same district association as Möritz, was unanimously elected as second chairman of Uniter in 2012. The CDU local politician Robert Mehliß, a lieutenant colonel in the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) Reserve, is said to have organised a meeting of the association in Saxony-Anhalt, according to news weekly

Der Spiegel.

The right-wing extremist developments in Saxony-Anhalt illustrate what is also happening on a federal level. The grand coalition of CDU and SPD has not only made the extreme right-wing AfD, which has close ties to the neo-Nazi German National Party (NPD), the official leader of the opposition in the Bundestag after the 2017 federal elections, but has also systematically integrated it into parliamentary work. Since then, the establishment parties and media have been increasingly openly courting the extreme right and working closely with it in order to enforce their policy of militarism, stepping up the repressive powers of the state and social cuts against the enormous opposition in the population.

The renewed turn to fascism in bourgeois politics in Germany is particularly evident in the case of the extreme right-wing Humboldt Professor Jörg Baberowski. Although he is notorious internationally for his trivialisation of National Socialism (telling *Der Spiegel* “Hitler was not vicious”) and his anti-refugee agitation, and is celebrated by fascist parties and race-hate magazines such as the NPD or the *Daily Stormer*, the German government stood behind the professor in an official statement last year.

Now, the extreme right-wing mastermind is to play a central role in the official commemoration of the end of the Second World War. On May 4, Baberowski will speak at a central event of the Saxony Memorials Foundation in Torgau, for which the CDU chairman and current Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer has also been requested as a speaker.

The fact that the German government is contemplating marking the end of the Second World War together with Baberowski confirms everything the *World Socialist Web Site* and the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) have declared in recent years. The ruling class must play down the crimes of the Third Reich and ultimately rehabilitate National Socialism in order to militarise Germany again and prepare it for war.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact