

Shots fired at SPD constituency office in Halle, Germany

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On the morning of 15 January, five bullet holes were discovered in the window of Karamba Diaby's constituency office in Halle, Germany. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) member of parliament says he receives threats of violence and death "almost every day." His portrait is shown on the window that was fired at.

Diaby, a graduate chemist and father of three children, is originally from Senegal. The attack clearly points to racist, right-wing extremist perpetrators.

The attack and threats against the politician are not an isolated case. Again and again, it has been confirmed, most recently with the terrorist killings by the neo-Nazi National Socialist Underground (NSU) and the murder of Kassel's district president Walter Lübcke, that Germany has a growing fascism problem.

Especially in Halle, there is a well-organized, violent right-wing scene. In the city on October 9, 2019—on the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur of all days—an armed right-wing extremist attacked the synagogue and killed two people. Only a coincidence prevented the worst anti-Semitic massacre in Europe since the end of Nazi rule.

Last year, the mosque in Halle-Neustadt was shot at; one man was slightly injured. The Halle victim advisory service lists 39 politically right-wing acts of violence in 2018. The Identitarian Movement has maintained the city as a centre of far-right activity for at least three years.

Diaby is also by no means the only politician to receive right-wing extremist death threats. More than 1,200 death threats and attacks on elected representatives and office holders were officially registered last year alone.

One of them is the mayor of Kamp-Lintfort, Christoph Landscheidt (SPD), who recently applied for

a gun license for himself. During the European election campaign in May 2019, he had Die Rechte (The Right) party posters removed from the cityscape for incitement. As a result, he was not only overwhelmed with anonymous death threats, but at the same time, the judiciary investigated him for "damage to property" and "election fraud." Several hundred residents of Kamp-Lintfort took to the streets to support the mayor on January 11.

Diaby has also been experiencing a wave of solidarity since the shooting of his constituency office. Many have come to offer their help, and one woman put flowers in the holes in the window. "The overwhelming majority of people want a society based on openness and solidarity," Diaby noted.

He also received nominal support from the highest level when Chancellor Merkel, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas and other politicians in the Bundestag (federal parliament) addressed what had happened to him. However, their remarks were extremely hypocritical.

In fact, the right-wing danger comes primarily from the ruling elite. Right-wing extremist networks have spread within the state apparatus, its authorities, the secret services, the police and the military. Not only since Christian Social Union (CSU) Interior Minister Horst Seehofer's statement that immigration was "the mother of all problems," have they been systematically covered up for, protected and encouraged by official policy.

Right-wing ideas are being propagated from the Bundestag, in the media and at universities. Recently Hans-Georg Maassen, the former president of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, as the German secret service is called, was allowed to denigrate refugees in the worst possible way and trivialize right-wing terrorism on television. The right

of far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) founder Bernd Lucke to lecture at Hamburg University was enforced with police violence, and a nationwide campaign for “freedom of opinion” was launched to silence his critics.

Although it has been known for months that right-wing networks and “preppers” are setting up entire arms depots, these are not being dug up, and people on their death lists are not systematically warned.

In Hesse, it has emerged how the secret service, the Interior Ministry and the state government cover up for right-wing extremist employees in the civil service. It has also come out that the murder of Walter Lübcke could be connected to the NSU murders. A key figure is Andreas Temme, who has been a public service employee for twenty years. As early as 2006, he was strongly suspected of being involved in the NSU murder of Halit Yozgat while he was controlling undercover Confidential Informants in the right-wing extremist scene, as an employee of the Hesse state branch of the secret service.

Hesse’s state premier Volker Bouffier, formerly Hesse’s state Interior Minister and his successor Peter Rhein (both CDU) still maintain their protective hand over Temme to this day. They have ensured that files of the Hesse secret service on the right-wing terrorist scene must remain under lock and key for another 40 years. It is indeed conceivable that Lübcke would still be alive today without this state policy of concealment.

Another case shows particularly vividly how racism and right-wing extremist violence are practised and protected within the state apparatus. Only 50 kilometres from Halle is Dessau, where Oury Jalloh died in a police cell fifteen years ago. The young man from Sierra Leone was picked up by a patrol, dragged to the police station and locked up in the cellar with his hands and feet tied. A few hours later he was dead, burned to death in a police cell.

To this day, the authorities maintain the official version that he himself set fire to the mattress on which he lay tied up. It is thanks to the initiative “In Memory of Oury Jalloh” and its supporters that this version is still being challenged today.

Most recently, a new forensic-radiological expert report commissioned by this initiative has revealed substantial injuries from exposure to violence. Jalloh’s body showed broken bones in the nasal bone, the nasal

septum, fractures of the anterior skull and a fractured rib. These injuries must have been inflicted on him in the period shortly before his death. Thus, everything points to the fact, as Jalloh’s brother’s lawyer explained, that the police officers had “not only unlawfully detained the murdered man, but had also severely abused and burned him in cell 5 to cover up the abuse.” Nevertheless, the courts refuse to reopen the case.

Right-wing violence, which has already left a bloody trail for several years, is covered up by official government policy. Since 2014, the grand coalition government of the CDU/CSU and SPD has been actively preparing for war, and since then it has also been preparing to take violent action against social resistance at home. Since September 2017, the AfD has officially been the largest opposition party in the Bundestag, while the government has been implementing AfD policies in war preparations, refugee policy and the establishment of a police state.

At the same time, the government attacks critics of its right-wing course and AfD policy. The Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) has classified the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP) as “left-wing extremist” and designated it as an object of surveillance. Its only “crime” is that it stands up for a socialist and international programme which, according to the secret service, is directed “against the existing state and social order, which is sweepingly denigrated as ‘capitalism’, against the EU, against supposed nationalism, imperialism and militarism.” The SGP has filed a legal complaint challenging its listing by the BfV.



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