

The case of Hans-Georg Maassen: A fascist at the summit of the German state

Christoph Vandreier
5 February 2024

Germany's main domestic intelligence agency, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Verfassungsschutz), revealed last week that it is pursuing its former boss, Hans-Georg Maassen, as a "right-wing extremist suspect." The agency has been forced to admit that it was led by a right-wing extremist for eight years.

The claim being made that Maassen only became a right-wing radical in recent years is nothing but a deceitful alibi. He was always a right-wing extremist, and that was common knowledge. In fact, his rise to the top of the secret service proves that fascist cliques are being systematically promoted and protected within the state apparatus.

Maassen himself has confirmed on his website that he is being monitored by the domestic intelligence service, after it was reported by public broadcaster ARD's political magazine *Kontraste*. The written statement from the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution on Maassen cites exclusively from statements that he made publicly and that leave no doubt about his right-wing extremist and fascist views.

For example, an article by Maassen from the Swiss *Weltwoche* is cited, in which he claims that Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Interior Minister Nancy Faeser (both Social Democrats, SPD) are aiming to bring about "the collapse of German society" with their refugee and migration policies "in order to build a neo-socialist social system on its ruins." He equated the influx of migrants with cancer, which must be combated with "chemotherapy."

Maassen founded a new party in January with the Values Union, which previously worked within the Christian Democrats (CDU). He has declared his willingness to form coalitions with the Alternative for Germany (AfD) and could help the fascist party to power, especially in East German federal states. Representatives of the Values Union participated in the notorious meeting of AfD representatives and other right-wing extremists in a Potsdam villa, which planned the deportation of millions of people with an immigrant background.

As head of the "Immigration Project Group" at the Federal Ministry of the Interior, Maassen advocated an extremely restrictive refugee policy and ensured that Murat Kurnaz, who was born and raised in Bremen, was detained in the

Guantanamo Bay detention center for five years despite being innocent.

In 2012, Maassen was appointed head of the Verfassungsschutz in order to cover up the spy agency's close ties with the right-wing terrorist National Socialist Underground (NSU) and to maintain the fascist network that was responsible for the murder of at least nine migrants and one policewoman.

After the AfD was founded, it could rely on the support of Maassen and his agency. Maassen demonstrably met several times with the AfD's then-Chairperson Frauke Petri, her successor Alexander Gauland and at least one representative of the fascist wing. He discussed with them, among other things, reports issued by the intelligence agency.

While he connected the intelligence agency more closely to the far-right milieu, he attacked anyone who stood in the way of the political right. In 2018, Maassen ordered the *Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei* (SGP, Socialist Equality Party) to be included in the Verfassungsschutz report as a "left-wing extremist organisation" and therefore exposed to intelligence surveillance. As a justification, the Verfassungsschutz stated that the party was "against alleged nationalism, imperialism and militarism" and denigrated capitalism.

The SGP filed a lawsuit against this decision and demonstrated thereby that the Federal Government is directly reviving the traditions of Bismarck's ban on the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the persecution of Social Democrats and Communists under Hitler: "Now the Grand Coalition and its secret service are preparing a third edition of the anti-socialist laws," the SGP wrote. "They are adopting the Alternative for Germany's (AfD) policies, and threatening anyone who criticises this right-wing extremist party with prohibition."

This was precisely the reason why Maassen was appointed to head the domestic intelligence agency. It was aimed at strengthening right-wing networks and illegalising Marxism. He was forced to resign only after public outrage erupted because he defended right-wing extremist rampages against migrants and Jews in the city of Chemnitz in 2018 and raved about "left-wing radical forces in the SPD."

Maassen's removal did not change the anti-democratic

agenda of the agency in the slightest. The right-wing extremist networks he covered up remained intact, and hundreds of employees he hired during his tenure remained at their posts. Thomas Haldenwang, who had previously worked closely with Maassen for five years as vice president of the Verfassungsschutz, was appointed as the new head. The SGP remained under intelligence surveillance, and the attacks were extended to other left-wing forces, such as the climate change protest group Ende Gelände and the daily newspaper *Junge Welt*.

The continuity at the domestic intelligence agency proves that the issue is not merely an individual but the political agenda of the ruling class. This is why Maassen was supported by all political parties. It was SPD Interior Minister Otto Schily who appointed him head of the “Immigration Project Group” in 2001. The CDU, Christian Social Union and Free Democrats (FDP) combined to make him head of the Verfassungsschutz. The Left Party also maintained close contact with him and even invited him to a public meeting in 2013.

The SGP is in the crosshairs of this political conspiracy because it uncovered the right-wing networks at the highest levels of the German political establishment and demonstrated how the ruling class in Germany is once again reviving its fascist traditions. The AfD was systematically built up, and its right-wing extremist refugee, war and domestic policies were implemented by the governments of Angela Merkel and Olaf Scholz. In the book *Why Are They Back?*, which examines the return of fascism in Germany, we explained:

If the ruling elite’s conspiracy in 1933 was based on an existing fascist movement, today the opposite is true. The rise of the AfD is the product of such a conspiracy. It cannot be understood without examining the role of the government, the state apparatus, the parties, the media and the ideologues in the universities that pave the way for it.

The book deals in particular with how the atrocities of the Nazis are being trivialised at German universities in order to make right-wing extremist positions acceptable and to cleanse German militarism of its historic crimes so as “to revive the goals [of German imperialism] of two world wars.”

When we criticized Humboldt Professor Jörg Baberowski for declaring in *Der Spiegel* that Hitler was “not vicious” and that the Holocaust was essentially the same as mass shootings during the Russian civil war, representatives of all parliamentary parties and most media outlets jumped to the side of the far-right professor. When dozens of student councils and thousands of students adopted the SGP’s criticism and protested against right-wing extremist doctrine, the secret service intervened and put the SGP on the list of extremist

organizations.

The Maassen case shows how correct our assessment was. The right-wing extremist terrorist networks in the state apparatus and the fascist AfD are not foreign bodies in an otherwise healthy organism, but the worst symptoms of a terminally sick system. As in the first half of the 20th century, capitalism leads to extreme forms of inequality and increasingly brutal imperialist wars. This is evident in the NATO war against Russia and Israel’s genocide against the Palestinians.

The German ruling class is once again playing a particularly aggressive role in the global eruption of imperialist war. It is openly preparing for a direct war against Russia and is massively rearming the military to make Germany “able to wage war” again. In refugee policy, too, the programme of the extreme right has long been government policy. As recently as 18 January, the Bundestag, with the votes of the governing SPD, Green, and FDP coalition parties, passed the so-called “Repatriation Improvement Act,” which lays the basis for the mass deportation of refugees.

This ruthless policy can only be enforced with the methods of dictatorship and fascism against the enormous opposition of the population. That is why the far right is strengthened and courted by all parties—not only in Germany, but all over the world. Everywhere, the ruling class is turning to dictatorial forms of rule.

But resistance to this is also growing all over the world. The mass demonstrations that have been taking place against the AfD for weeks show how great the opposition to the return of fascism and war is in Germany. But they also pose the question of political perspective in the most urgent possible terms. In the struggle against the fascist right, no trust can be placed in the bourgeois state apparatus and the parties that defend it and capitalism and court the right. Only an international movement of the working class against capitalism can stop war and fascism.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact