

Against the censorship of left-wing bookshops in Germany! Defend freedom of culture and expression!

Mehring Verlag
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Mehring Verlag, the publishing house of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party), strongly condemns the government's recent censorship of left-wing bookshops. Minister of State for Culture Wolfram Weimer has removed three left-wing bookshops from the list of bookshops that had been nominated for the German Bookshop Prize by an independent expert jury. He then summarily cancelled the ceremonial presentation of the award at the Leipzig Book Fair.

These measures represent a targeted political attack on freedom of expression. Booksellers who offer critical, socialist and anti-militarist literature—including books by Mehring Verlag—are being censored and criminalised.

The decision is not based on comprehensible, legally verifiable facts, but on secret information from the Verfassungsschutz (Office for the Protection of the Constitution, as Germany's domestic secret service is called), the content of which is neither disclosed nor judicially verifiable. The fact that the Verfassungsschutz is involved in this—an agency that is itself known for its involvement in right-wing networks—underscores the explosive nature of this process. Intelligence service assessments are replacing transparent, democratic decisions. This shows that the Verfassungsschutz itself is a danger to democracy.

A precedent is being set here: State cultural funding is being tied to political loyalty. Anyone who distributes critical left-wing literature is to be excluded from public support, intimidated and economically weakened.

The book industry in Germany has experienced for itself where this development leads. After 1933,

countless writers and intellectuals were forced to leave the country or were persecuted and imprisoned. Millions of books that did not fit into the dull and reactionary worldview of the Nazis ended up on the bonfire.

The political character of this censorship becomes particularly clear when viewed in its social context. The government is investing billions in military rearmament and bolstering the repressive powers of the state, while it takes the red pen to the cultural and social sector and tightens political control. It targets left-wing bookshops and organisations, while the right-wing extremist Alternative for Germany (AfD) is normalised and strengthened, politically and in the media. Their positions have long since shaped government policy—from intensified attacks on refugees to authoritarian domestic repression.

With the latest act of censorship, the government is reacting to the fact that opposition is growing within the population against its pro-war policies and ever more stark levels of social inequality. Interest in socialist ideas is growing among young people—a development that worries ruling circles and which they want to prevent.

Mehring Verlag demands the immediate withdrawal of Minister of State for Culture Weimer's decision and the full disclosure of the criteria according to which the removal took place. Furthermore, any influence by the intelligence services on cultural funding must be ended immediately. The Verfassungsschutz itself should be abolished.

We declare our unreserved solidarity with the affected bookshops and call on all publishers, authors, booksellers and visitors to the Leipzig Book Fair to

defend democratic freedoms in the entire cultural sector
against arbitrary state actions and political censorship.



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