

German police linked to neo-Nazi murders and Ku Klux Klan

By Sebastian Brügge
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In 2001, an unusual ceremony took place near Schwäbisch Hall in the German state of Baden-Württemberg. A man was led blindfolded to a secret location, where he signed an oath in blood and was initiated into the Ku Klux Klan with a “knightly” dubbing.

The individual who described his admission into the organisation, the European White Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, was a police officer. Another policeman was also a member of the fascist organization at the time.

Furthermore, both were colleagues of Michèle Kiesewetter, a policewoman murdered in Heilbronn in 2007. One of the men had been her squad leader. Kiesewetter’s killing was attributed to the extreme right-wing terrorist organization, the National Socialist Underground (NSU, *Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund*), responsible for the murder of nine immigrants between 2000 and 2006.

The membership of the two police in the Ku Klux Klan came to light during the recent review of files connected with the racist murders carried out by the NSU. This was confirmed by the state interior ministry in Stuttgart. The officers, now 32 and 42, are still serving in the police force.

Police investigations into the Ku Klux Klan unearthed the involvement of the two officers in 2003. The two officers claimed in their statements that they were initially unaware of the Klan’s racist outlook. Explaining the reasons for their membership, they mentioned the Klan’s “interesting” bible readings, the “nice and friendly” company, and the hope of meeting some women there. One of the officers was said to have left the group when “a real Nazi” started spouting slogans at one of the meetings.

This account is utterly implausible. The words Ku

Klux Klan immediately bring to everyone’s mind images of white hoods, burning crosses and racial hatred against black people. The German branch of the Ku Klux Klan, which has allegedly once again disbanded, rarely showed itself in public. It operated in secret and predominantly in the violent far-right scene, the milieu that spawned the NSU and that is thoroughly penetrated by secret service undercover agents.

The *Tageszeitung* newspaper reported that internal documents of the Baden-Württemberg Office for the Protection of the Constitution (as the secret service is called) revealed the German branch of the US organization was founded in October 2000 by skinhead musician S. Achim, alias Ryan Davis. It consisted of about 20 members until around late 2002. The aim of the German branch of the Klan was the “preservation of the white race in a white Europe”. Only those who had white skin and no Jewish ancestry were accepted into the organization.

Photographs belonging to the musician showed the two policemen posing in front of Ku Klux Klan flags. It was apparent that they were at home in this environment. It remains to be seen whether the initial position of the federal prosecutor’s office—i.e., its claim that neither of the two police officers was connected with the NSU—will be maintained.

Many questions are raised by the murder of policewoman Michèle Kiesewetter, who came from the same state (Thuringia) as her alleged murderers. Unlike the NSU’s previous murders, there were no grounds for suspecting a racist motive behind the killing.

The *Bild* tabloid recently reported that the two NSU terrorists, Uwe Böhnhardt and Uwe Mundlos, had for days been lying in wait for the police officer in vain, because she had suddenly decided to spend a holiday with her mother. But on April 25, 2007, Kiesewetter

telephoned the department where she worked in Heilbronn, asking to be placed on patrol. According to the duty roster, she should have been off.

Böhnhardt and Mundlos subsequently extended the lease on their caravan home. The newspaper asked: “Did they receive a tip-off?” Could it possibly have come from the two police officers with ties to the Ku Klux Klan, one of whom was Kieseewetter’s boss?

The *Report aus München* television program recently revealed that Kieseewetter’s godfather, who is also a policeman, made a remarkable statement in May 2007. Just eight days after the murder of his niece, he had concluded it was related to “the murder of the Turks”.

This raises the question of what the police officer knew at that time. The relationship between the immigrants’ and Kieseewetter’s murders was only made public when the NSU was uncovered in early November last year. It is also unclear why no one was prepared at the time to pursue such vital evidence. Kieseewetter’s uncle refused to be interviewed by the television reporters.

The truth is that the extreme right-wing, violent milieu was well acquainted with the racist murders. Could Kieseewetter possibly have learnt something from them? Did she know her killers? Böhnhardt had repeatedly visited her home town of Oberweissbach in Thuringia. An NSU supporter had even run a pub there. The question also remains: why did the NSU cease its racist killings after the murder of the police officer?

The testimony of witnesses to the murder has also proved to be contradictory. Two statements indicate that a single man with a bloodied arm fled into a waiting car. Other witnesses saw two men and a woman escaping the scene. The investigating authorities have now concluded that the accounts are not credible.

However, Clemens Binninger, a former police officer and conservative Christian Democratic Union member of the NSU parliamentary inquiry committee, says the statements are credible since they are in line with police records and assumptions.

Following analysis of the testimony in 2009, the Baden-Württemberg criminal investigation department proposed that, in fact, up to six people were involved.

All that can be said is that Michèle Kieseewetter was certainly not killed because the terrorists were “weapons fanatics” bent on stealing the weapons of

Kieseewetter and her colleague, who survived with serious injuries. That is what the federal criminal police office (BKA) originally claimed.

After the summer break, the Heilbronn murder will be the central focus of the NSU parliamentary investigative committee, and additional relevant documents from Baden-Württemberg have already been requested. Some of the records were withheld from the initial inquiry because they were allegedly “irrelevant to the case”.

According to Binninger, the investigative committee then requested all the files. “I strongly suspect that the Baden-Württemberg interior ministry is behaving just as all the other ministries have behaved so far”, he said. However, he believes “that we will get all the files we need for our task”.

Binninger’s confidence that all files will be passed on to the investigation committee is seriously misplaced in view of the widely reported deliberate destruction of documents.

The intelligence services—the Secret Service and the Military Counterintelligence Service—and the police authorities have for months repeatedly destroyed records or withheld important files from the committee. Some files were even shredded by order of the interior ministry.

As a result, the precise details of the relationships between the intelligence agencies, the extreme right and the NSU remain hidden and the circumstances surrounding the murder of Kieseewetter unexplained.

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