

Chemnitz and the call for a stronger state

By Peter Schwarz
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After the recent right-wing extremist marches in Chemnitz, representatives of all Bundestag (parliamentary) parties are calling for the state to intervene.

The secret service should very closely monitor the interaction of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) and neo-Nazis, demanded Bundestag Vice President Thomas Oppermann (Social Democratic Party, SPD). Justice Minister Katarina Barley (SPD) wants to call in the Attorney General to find out which organizations are behind the mobilization of right-wing perpetrators of violence in the protests in Chemnitz. “We do not tolerate right-wing radicals infiltrating our society,” she said.

“The state has to show that it is a strong state,” said Christian Democratic parliamentary faction leader Volker Kauder in the *Welt am Sonntag*. Right-wing radicalism had “taken on a new dimension with the subsequent approval of the events by AfD politicians.” It should be established who supported the AfD with millions of euros in the general election campaign, he added. Federal Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (Christian Social Union, CSU), who is responsible for the secret service, has so far rejected placing the AfD under observation.

Green Party leader Annalena Baerbock also demanded that the AfD be monitored by the secret service. “You can see the AfD radicalizing,” she told the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. The AfD had “consciously and visibly” joined in with “offensive anti-constitutional forces.” She therefore “shares the assessment of the corresponding state secret service agency, which considers observation to be appropriate.”

Free Democratic Party (FDP) leader Christian Lindner told the *Rheinische Post*, some parts of the AfD and some of its elected officials openly opposed the liberal order. “Then you have to watch them.”

The Left Party fully agreed with these demands. Parliamentary group leader Dietmar Bartsch wrote on Twitter: “It is right if the group leader of the Union [Christian Democrats] wants to act against the hatred and witch-hunting of the AfD. Words must be followed by

deeds.” Left Party leader Katja Kipping also demanded that the secret service observe the AfD. “The Höcke wing is on the rise, and the right-wing radicalization of the AfD will progress,” she said in an interview with broadcaster ARD.

To call for the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, as Germany’s secret service is known, to intervene against the right-wing extremists means to set a thief to catch a thief. It is well known that the right-wing extremist scene is riddled with undercover informants from the security agencies, who not only “observe” it, but actively support it.

The case of Tino Brandt, who received DM 200,000 from the secret service to build up the Thuringia Homeland Security, from which the neo-Nazi NSU terrorist group (National Socialist Underground) then emerged, is only the best known of many similar instances. The leadership of the German National Party (NPD) contained so many secret service undercover informants that the Supreme Court rejected imposing a ban on the right-wing extremist party in 2003, on the grounds that it was “an affair of the state.”

It would be the height of naïvete to believe that things are any different today. The number of state informers and provocateurs among the 6,000 right-wingers and neo-Nazis who terrorized Chemnitz on August 27, made Nazi salutes and chased foreigners was probably greater than the number of police officers there, who were supposedly completely surprised by the events.

In addition, many members of the police, the intelligence services and the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) sympathize with the AfD, vote for them, or even represent them in state and federal parliaments. Only recently it became known that the head of the secret service, Hans-Georg Maaßen, had met for confidential talks with AfD chief Alexander Gauland and his predecessor Frauke Petry.

Of course, this is all well known to the representatives of the Bundestag parties, having dealt with the activities of the secret service many times in committees of inquiry.

Only a few days ago, Maaßen was reproached for having lied to the Bundestag and purposely concealed the fact that the secret service had placed an informant close to Anis Amri, the attacker at Berlin's Breitscheidplatz, responsible for killing twelve people in December 2016.

That all the establishment parties still call for the secret service to intervene shows what their real motives are. What alarms them is not the collaboration between AfD, Pegida and neo-Nazis. The extreme right-wing character of the AfD can be witnessed regularly in the Bundestag. To reach this conclusion, it was not necessary to observe Bernd Höcke of the AfD and Lutz Bachmann of Pegida marching together through Chemnitz at the head of a brown mob. Most recently, when AfD chief Alexander Gauland trivialised Hitler and the Nazis as mere "bird shit in over a thousand years of successful German history," no one could any longer have doubted where the AfD stands politically.

What alarms the politicians of the Christian Democrats, SPD, FDP, Greens and Left Party is the massive reaction to the Nazi terror in Chemnitz. There were large counter-demonstrations not only in Chemnitz itself, but also in many other German cities. This is why they are now calling for the secret service to intervene. The political establishment want it to be strengthened to suppress this movement and prevent it from being directed against the grand coalition of the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, which has paved the way for the AfD with its right-wing policies, and has fully adopted its refugee policy.

While some politicians still feign solidarity with the protests against the AfD, CDU General Secretary Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer has already made clear that the thrust of state action will be directed against the left. In *Die Welt*, she attacked the "Rock against the Right" concert, which had been expected to draw tens of thousands on Monday evening in Chemnitz.

Kramp-Karrenbauer criticized the fact that, in addition to the "Toten Hosen" and other bands, "Feine Sahne Fischfilet" were also playing. In reports by the Mecklenburg Pomerania state secret service, the popular punk rock band had been accused of harbouring "left-wing extremist ambitions" because they had attacked the police in their song lyrics. Now, the CDU General Secretary criticized the band's appearance in Chemnitz on the grounds that we want to "protect our democracy and our constitutional state against the right. And if you do that with those on the left, (...) then I think that's more than critical."

In Saxony-Anhalt, a stronghold of the AfD right-wing, the CDU works directly with the AfD against left-wingers. A year ago, the majority of the CDU parliamentary group there decided together with the AfD upon a Commission of Inquiry to investigate so-called left-wing extremism. "In the confrontation with the left-wing scene," it should strengthen the state and develop recommendations for action "for a successful fight against left-wing extremism."

The secret service has a clear position on this issue. The "Constitutional Report 2017," penned by the secret service, which appeared in July, does not mention the AfD and its right-wing extremist periphery, but calls any opposition to nationalism, imperialism and militarism "left-wing extremist" and "anti-constitutional."

A central place in the report is given over to the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party, SGP). It has come into the cross-hairs of the secret service because it rejects capitalism, advocates a socialist program, and has conducted a systematic struggle against the downplaying of Nazism by the far-right Berlin academic Jörg Baberowski and other historians.

The close collaboration of all the Bundestag parties with the secret service confirms that the AfD is part of a conspiracy at the highest level of the state. In face of growing social and international tensions, the ruling elites are reverting to authoritarian forms of rule and fascist forces to repress resistance to their policies of social cuts, militarism and state rearmament.

The only social force that can counter this and stop the right wing is the international working class. To do this it needs a socialist program and an international party that combines the fight against fascism and war with the fight against capitalism—the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei and the International Committee of the Fourth International.

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