

# German political parties and media express solidarity with far-right AfD

By Ulrich Rippert and Johannes Stern  
14 January 2019

The recent attack on AfD politician Frank Magnitz has been used by Germany's parliamentary parties and leading media outlets to organise an unprecedented propaganda campaign on behalf of the Alternative for Germany and declare their solidarity with this right-wing extremist party. Magnitz is the chairman of the AfD in the city of Bremen and was attacked on Monday evening by three unknown persons. He suffered a head injury and was taken to the hospital where he was treated.

The AfD immediately declared the attack an "attempted murder" (according to AfD federal chairman Alexander Gauland) carried out by "left-wing terrorists" (AfD spokesman Jörg Meuthen). In a press release, the party leadership described the attack as follows: "They [the perpetrators] beat him unconscious with a square piece of timber and continued to kick his head when he was on the ground. It is only thanks to the courageous intervention of a construction worker that the attackers could not complete their plan and Frank Magnitz escaped with his life. He now lies seriously injured in hospital."

It is now known that this account was entirely fictitious. The incident had been recorded by several surveillance cameras, and one day later the police announced that the version given by the AfD was false. What took place was clearly visible from the surveillance camera videos, declared Frank Passade, spokesman for the Bremen prosecutor's office. On Monday evening Magnitz was pursued on the way to his car by three unknown persons. One of them hit Magnitz on the back or on the head with his elbow.

Magnitz then tumbled to the ground and hit his head as the three suspects ran away. Ten to 15 seconds later two workers attended to Magnitz. One of them made an emergency call. On the basis of the video recordings,

prosecutor Passade said that any kicks to the head or the use of a piece of timber or other object could be ruled out. "We assume that the injuries suffered are solely due to his fall," he said.

The claim made that one of the workers reported hearing footsteps and saw the piece of wood was also false. According to Passade, both of the workers stated to police that they had not even seen the crime. They were only aware that something had happened when they heard screams. They made no mention of a wooden club.

Notwithstanding these facts, during the following days the media printed the lies of the AfD as if they were established facts. Gauland, Meuthen and the already recovered Magnitz were interviewed as key witnesses on the main news programs. The trio raged against an alleged "attack by anti-fascists," referred to a bloody hate campaign directed against the AfD and a "black day for democracy in Germany."

In fact, the background to the incident remains unclear. Neither the perpetrators nor their motives have been identified, so it is not clear whether Magnitz was attacked for political, personal or criminal reasons. He is currently under investigation by the Bremen prosecutor on suspicion of embezzling party funds.

The rest of the parties represented in the German parliament (Bundestag) have reacted to the lies of the AfD with a campaign of support. The ruling grand coalition of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Christian Social Union (CSU), and Social Democratic Party (SPD), plus the opposition Free Democratic Party, Greens and Left Party, all published statements expressing their solidarity with Magnitz and the AfD. One has the impression they were all just waiting for the chance to embrace this far-right party.

Minister Heiko Maas (SPD) wrote on Twitter:

“Violence should never be a means of political debate—no matter who or what the motives are. There is no justification for that. Anyone who perpetrates such a crime must be rigorously punished.” The CDU general secretary, Paul Ziemniak, stated that there had to be an end to “incitement, contempt, hatred and violence. This seed must not be allowed to grow.”

On Twitter, Green politician Cem Özdemir wished Magnitz to “get well soon” and condemned the “cowardly attack.” It was “a regrettable ground to make clear that violence is never justified, irrespective of the motivation.” The Left Party expressed similar sentiments in an official press release. “The attack on Mr. Magnitz” must be “clearly condemned,” she wrote, “Violence against persons is no way to resolve political or personal differences.” One hopes “that the background of the deed will be cleared up quickly and Mr. Magnitz will completely recover.”

Germany’s social democrat federal president Frank-Walter Steinmeier went so far as to write a personal letter to Magnitz. According to the dpa news agency, he described “any form of violence against elected officials” as “an attack on our constitutional state.” He then issued an appeal to the AfD: “We must unite and resolutely oppose this.”

The solidarity statements with Magnitz and Steinmeier’s approach to the AfD demonstrate how far the German ruling class has shifted to the right 74 years after the fall of the Third Reich. Magnitz is a representative of the extreme (völkisch) nationalist wing within the AfD and maintains close relations with far-right AfD deputy Björn Höcke, who has openly advocated National Socialist (Nazi) views in the past.

Steinmeier’s appeal for defence of the “constitutional state” in alliance with the AfD and other right-wing radicals should be taken as a warning. Steinmeier is clearly not referring to basic democratic rights, which are constantly attacked by the AfD, but rather to the state apparatus, which is constantly being rearmed. As was the case in the 1930s, the ruling class is once again relying on a powerful state apparatus and right-wing extremists to enforce its policy of militarism, social cuts and domestic rearmament against growing resistance from the working class.

All of Germany’s political parties have been collaborating with the AfD behind the scenes. In January 2018, all of the parliamentary groups agreed to

allow the AfD to chair the most important committee of the Bundestag, its Budget Committee. The Bundestag Legal Affairs Committee and Tourism Committee are also chaired by the AfD. Especially with regard to refugee policy, the federal government and various state governments are all implementing the program of the AfD.

The domestic intelligence agency (Office for the Protection of the Constitution, BfV) report of the grand coalition was also drafted in close cooperation with the AfD. While the AfD and its far-right milieu feature merely as “victims” of alleged “left-wing extremists,” all opposition to capitalism, nationalism, imperialism and militarism is declared illegal and described as “left-wing extremist” and “anti-constitutional.”

The Magnitz case reveals the extent to which the AfD has been integrated into official politics in order to establish a right-wing authoritarian regime in Germany. Following the latest pro-AfD campaign in politics and the media, it is only a matter of time before the party becomes directly involved in government.

The Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (SGP) is not prepared to tolerate such a development. It has undertaken legal action against the party’s surveillance by the BfV and is participating in the forthcoming European elections with a nationwide list to arm the massive opposition among workers and youth to the far right with a socialist program.

To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

<http://www.wsws.org>