

Germany: How a right-wing conspiracy in the state apparatus is suppressing the investigation of the Lübcke murder case

By Ulrich Rippert
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More than five weeks have passed since Kassel District President Walter Lübcke (Christian Democratic Union, CDU) was murdered on the terrace of his house with a targeted shot to the head by a neo-Nazi. Since then, every effort has been made to cover up the close involvement of the alleged perpetrator with a far-right terrorist network that reaches deep into the secret services and the state apparatus.

Whoever expected that the brutal murder by a fascist of a high-ranking politician from Chancellor Angela Merkel's party would cause a shock in German politics; whoever expected extensive investigations into the question of how it could be that 75 years after the Nazi terror politicians are again being murdered by fascists; whoever expected the media to report the affair intensively and ask critical questions—was soon taught otherwise.

The chancellor and some politicians expressed their regrets and offered their condolences to the bereaved, after which the right-wing terrorist attack has been treated like a political triviality: “Regrettable, but not unusual.” Although it is a fatal reminder of the political murders in the Weimar Republic of the 1920s and 1930s, where paramilitary organizations with close ties to the state apparatus murdered senior politicians, the business of politics goes on regardless.

In political circles in Berlin, the main concern is about the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). The right-wing extremist party should not be marginalized or otherwise damaged, according to these circles, because of the Lübcke murder. Just two weeks after the murder, former German president Joachim Gauck spoke up and demanded that the term “right-wing” be “detoxified.” In his pastoral chatter, he demanded “an extended tolerance towards the right” and criticized the parliamentary parties because they had not yet elected an AfD member to the vice-presidency of the Bundestag (parliament).

It is the same with Friedrich Merz—who 10 years ago led the CDU parliamentary group, then made his career at BlackRock, the world's largest asset manager, and is now aiming for a leading position in politics again. He has demanded that political cooperation with the AfD should never be ruled out.

The reasons underlying the refusal to fully air the criminal and political issues involved in the Lübcke murder are disturbing. Clearly, the right-wing conspiracy inside the state apparatus, which reaches deep into the entire political system, has assumed a

dimension that can no longer be controlled.

The murder of a senior CDU politician is not least of all a warning that no one can be secure in his or her safety. Politicians, parties and the media are being threatened and intimidated to prevent the truth about the right-wing extremist network from coming to light.

Meanwhile, it is undeniable that Stephan Ernst, the major suspect in the killing, is a member of a comprehensive terrorist network, continuing the work of the neo-Nazi National Socialist Underground (NSU), which murdered nine migrants and one policewoman between 2000 and 2007.

Professor Hajo Funke, an expert on right-wing terrorism and author of the book *Sicherheitsrisiko Verfassungsschutz* (Security Risk Secret Services), wrote on his blog last weekend: “The murder of Walter Lübcke, the district president of Kassel, has been carried out by a perpetrator who has lived and acted in the hotspot of the terrorism-supporting scene surrounding Combat 18—the ‘Adolf Hitler fighting force’—in Kassel. ... This scene and contact network in and around Kassel include the who's who of the C18 and NSU supporter scene.”

A detailed account follows of the right-wing terrorist network in which the Lübcke murderer moved. Funke provides almost a dozen names of known neo-Nazis, including Ralf Wohlleben, who sat in the dock at the Munich NSU trial and was eventually convicted, and Thorsten Heise, a C18 leader and leader of the Aryan Brotherhood—“a sort of elite or superordinate fraternity with a corresponding degree of familiarity.”

Among the friends of Stephan Ernst is Benjamin G., who belonged to the Kassel neo-Nazi and hooligan scene for years and who worked as a Confidential Informer (CI) for the secret service under the code name “Gemüse” [vegetable]. His controller, Andreas Temme, was present at a Kassel internet café on April 6, 2006, when the NSU murdered its ninth victim, Halit Yozgat. Later, Temme switched from the Hesse state branch of the secret service to the district council of Walter Lübcke, where he still works today.

According to other reports, the NSU murderers Uwe Mundlos and Uwe Böhnhardt also frequented the Kassel neo-Nazi scene.

The NSU had close connections to the intelligence services; there are many indications that it was even controlled by them. For example, the Thuringia Homeland Security group was built by

confidential informant (CI) Tino Brandt, who received 200,000 D-Marks for his services, most of which flowed into the construction of the right-wing extremist organization. But Brandt was not the only CI; almost one-third of the 150 members of the Thuringia Homeland Security worked for the state.

In the Munich NSU trial, which lasted for five years, several victims' lawyers tried to shed light on the role of state authorities in the series of murders. They were met with a wall of granite. Both the attorney general who headed the prosecution and the court ceased all appropriate investigative action. Secret service employees received no or only limited permission to testify; files were declared secret and withheld from the court.

Now, with Lübcke, a representative of the state has fallen victim to this right-wing terrorist network—and the cover-up continues.

Meanwhile, the attorney general has taken over the investigation itself. As in the NSU trial, he is trying to cover up or downplay Ernst's connections to the NSU network and to the intelligence services.

A few days ago, Ernst's confession, which he has since withdrawn for tactical reasons, fell into the hands of the press. Numerous articles appeared as a result, which presented him as a mentally disturbed individual who suffers from depression. Ernst, the story runs, had freed himself from the right-wing extremist scene 10 years ago to lead a "normal life with a family and work." It was only the murders committed by immigrants that had "stirred him up" and led to the assassination attempt on Lübcke.

The NSU files of the Hesse state secret service could probably provide an insight into the network of right-wing terrorists, neo-Nazis, confidential informants and secret service agents to which Lübcke fell prey. However, the Hesse state executive, led by former interior minister Volker Bouffier, has decided to keep these files secret until 2044.

"The fact that the regional secret service report on the violent right-wing scene in Hesse is to be kept under lock and key for decades confirms that information has been deliberately hidden here," writes Funke. "The security authorities, in particular the secret services, have a tremendous knowledge of the violent and right-wing terrorist networks in Germany, without sharing this with the law enforcement authorities, more often withholding it."

Hesse state Premier Bouffier comes from the conservative "Stahlhelm wing" of the CDU, in which AfD boss Alexander Gauland also made his career for 40 years. The Greens, who form the state government in Hesse together with the CDU, support the decision to keep the NSU files secret for a further 25 years.

Complicity with the right-wing extremists extends into the executive level of the secret services. In 2012, when former deputy president of the secret service Klaus-Dieter Fritsche was called before the Bundestag NSU committee of inquiry to provide information about his role and responsibility in the destruction of NSU files, he attacked the parliamentarians sharply, saying that state security stood far higher than parliament's right of control.

Committee Chair Sebastian Edathy, who rightly rebuked him, paid a heavy price for this. A short time later, child pornography images were allegedly discovered on his Bundestag computer and Edathy was ruined politically and personally. Fritsche rose to become special representative in the chancellery for the

coordination of the secret services. After his retirement on age grounds, he went on to advise the right-wing extremists of the Austrian Freedom Party in the Vienna interior ministry.

Even clearer is the close connection of ex-secret service president Hans-Georg Maassen to the right-wing. He worked closely with the AfD, attacked the refugee policy of Chancellor Merkel and downplayed the actions of right-wing radicals in Chemnitz last summer. Since his removal as head of the secret service, he has been active on the right wing of the CDU and is committed to fostering cooperation between the Christian Democrats and AfD.

Right-wing terrorist networks also exist in the Bundeswehr (armed forces) and the police, which remain largely undisturbed, despite their hoarding of weapons and creating lists of potential victims.

Five weeks after the murder of Walter Lübcke, an alarming picture emerges.

The secret services and large parts of the security apparatus are dominated by right-wing extremists and neo-fascists and systematically block the investigation and prosecution of right-wing terrorism. The AfD acts as the political arm of right-wing terrorism and is itself constantly moving to the right. It dominates government policy not only on the refugee issue.

In parallel, the universities are "reassessing" German history, systematically downplaying German crimes during World Wars I and II. Professor Jörg Baberowski, who rehabilitated the Hitler apologist Ernst Nolte five years ago and claimed that "Hitler was not vicious," is still being defended by the university and the government.

Three weeks ago we wrote that the murder of Lübcke was a warning: "Under conditions of mounting social tensions and geopolitical conflicts, the ruling elite is resorting to its authoritarian and militarist traditions. Under the veneer of democracy applied to German capitalism following Hitler's downfall, the original brown color of fascism is clearly visible." This assessment is being confirmed every day.

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