

Germany: Did AfD-related public prosecutors cover up right-wing extremist attacks in Berlin?

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With terrorist sympathisers in the police force, neo-Nazi networks in the Special Forces Commandos (KSK) and the armed forces, the involvement of the secret service in right-wing extremist attacks, nobody can continue to close their eyes to the fact that right-wing terrorism in Germany comes from inside the state apparatus and flourishes there.

Just how close the connections and complicity are between neo-Nazis, the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD), police, the Verfassungsschutz (secret service) and the judiciary is shown by recent events in Berlin.

Last Wednesday, Berlin Attorney General Margarete Koppers was forced to take over the investigation of the right-wing extremist series of attacks in the Neukölln district. According to a press release, circumstances had arisen “which make the bias of a public prosecutor seem possible.”

Since 2013, at least 72 right-wing extremist crimes, including 23 arsons, have shaken the working-class district in the south of Berlin. The victims were mainly people who are active against right-wing extremism or have an immigration background.

New facts suggest that right-wing extremists within the judicial system have deliberately delayed and prevented the investigation. More and more details are coming to light that point to a network between the state authorities and the neo-Nazi scene.

According to media reports, the accusations concern not only the Berlin public prosecutor “S,” who is directly investigating the case, but also the head of the state security department of the public prosecutor’s office, Matthias Fenner, responsible for politically motivated crimes. Both have now been transferred.

In an interrogation of the right-wing extremist suspect and former AfD politician Tilo P., Fenner is said to have identified himself as an AfD voter and like-minded person. He assured P. that he had nothing to fear from the judiciary. This is shown in the record of a chat surveillance of March 2017, in which P. reported on the interrogation to the second main suspect Sebastian T., a previously convicted Nazi thug and local politician belonging to the neo-Nazi German National Democratic Party (NPD). According to Prosecutor General Koppers, P. is said to have told T. that one felt “in good hands with the public prosecutor’s office because of this statement.”

According to the *Legal Tribune Online* (LTO), the passage had already been noticed in an evaluation report of the Berlin State Office for Criminal Investigations (LKA) dated September 2019. The victim’s attorney, Franziska Nedelmann, who was able to view this report, demanded to see the original surveillance records. After being denied these, she filed a complaint with the General Prosecutor’s Office on July 10, thus setting the ball rolling.

2018—Attack on Ferat Kocak

What in recent years was repeatedly described by the Berlin Senate and the authorities as “mishaps” and “errors” in the investigations into the Neukölln series of attacks, apparently followed a pattern. The Kocak case is particularly revealing here. In the night of February 1, 2018, Neukölln left-wing politician Ferat Kocak became the victim of a dangerous arson attack on his car. He and his family, who were sleeping in the apartment building next door, only avoided death by a hair’s breadth.

That same night, the car of bookseller Heinz Ostermann also went up in flames—already the third attack on the owner of the left-wing Neukölln bookstore “Leporello.” In 2017, Neukölln Social Democratic Party (SPD) politician Mirjam Blumenthal and IG Metall trade union activist Detlef Fendt were also hit by arson attacks.

Only after pressure from lawyers and the public did it gradually come out that the attack on Kocak (and possibly also the other attacks) was prepared under the eyes and perhaps even with the help of the authorities.

January 2018: Attack planning. The LKA and the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (as the secret service is called) learned from an intercepted conversation of the main suspects P. and T. on January 15, 2018 about the planning of a possible attack on Kocak, but did not warn him. The authorities were aware that the suspects were spying on the victim’s apartment. The secret service therefore issued an affidavit to the LKA on January 30, 2018—i.e., two days before the arson attack on Kocak—which was to enable further investigations.

The vice head of the LKA, Oliver Stepien, did not admit this incident until November 2019 in the Interior Committee of Berlin state legislature. The police claimed that they had not warned Kocak because he was not considered to be in danger—even though Kocak is known for his public appearances against the right-wing. Then they referred to the “protection of sources”, a typical argument of the secret services to hold their protective hand over right-wing radicals.

February 2018: House search, but no arrest. According to a report in *taz*, the police ordered arrest and search warrants against P. and T. as late as the evening of February 1, i.e. only one day after the attack, referring in detail to findings of the secret service. P. and T. were held to be responsible for the attack on Kocak as well as on the bookseller Ostermann. The Tiergarten Local Court thereupon allowed the search but considered the warrants to be insufficiently justified. During the house searches on February 2, 2018, a great deal of evidence was then confiscated, but the evaluation results remained secret. Meanwhile, P. and T. are at liberty and can continue to commit attacks.

March 2018: LKA man meets neo-Nazis. On March 16, 2018, secret service officers observed how a Berlin LKA official named W. first met with the main suspect Sebastian T. and three other neo-Nazis in a pub in Neukölln-Rudow and then drove off with T. in his car. This is the result

of research by broadcasters ARD and rbb in April 2019.

The victim advisory centre “Reachout” then reported the incident because it was suspected that the LKA employee had passed on secret information to right-wing extremists at this and possibly other meetings, thus aiding and abetting criminal acts. However, the proceedings were dropped.

Enemy lists with personal data on 500 people—even before 2013

In May 2019, the Berlin Interior Senator (state interior minister), Andreas Geisel, then commissioned a 30-member special commission called “Fokus” to review the Neukölln series of attacks. In February 2020, this disclosed a few interim findings.

Firstly, it corrected the presumed number of victims from 30 to 72. Secondly, in evaluating the computers that had been confiscated from the main suspects in 2018, it found more than 500 personal data records from the years before 2013. Allegedly, these enemy lists, sorted in folders according to topics such as Antifa, politicians, journalists, and police officers could only have been sorted in autumn 2019. LKA head André Rauhut brazenly declared to the Interior Affairs Committee that the lists did not show “any concrete threats”; so far only 30 persons had been informed.

The Fokus commission also stated that besides the AfD member Tilo P. and the NPD member Sebastian T., Julian B. was also considered a main suspect. The neo-Nazi with a criminal record is said to have spied out possible targets for attacks with T. His apartment had already been searched in 2017 because he was suspected of incitement against Jewish institutions as the operator of the right-wing extremist Facebook group “Freie Kräfte Neukölln” (“Neukölln Free Forces”). But the proceedings against him were dropped. Julian B. is also at large.

2016—Police officer in exchanges with AfD and Tilo P.

Not only in the Kocak case, but also the attacks on the Leporello bookstore, it becomes clear that the police, AfD and neo-Nazis are in close contact in Neukölln.

According to research by broadcasters ARD and NDR, the public prosecutor’s office is currently investigating the Berlin police commissioner, Detlef M., because he is said to have passed on police internal information about the attack on Breitscheidplatz in 2016 in a Telegram chat group of the AfD. Numerous Neukölln AfD members belonged to this chat group, including the alleged right-wing terrorist Tilo P.

The policeman in question had already been in contact with district board members of the Neukölln AfD and Tilo P. in autumn 2016. This was reported in June by the daily newspaper *taz*, which has possession of the relevant email correspondence. According to this, P.’s proposal to visit an anti-fascist event at the Leporello bookstore on December 2, 2016 was discussed. Some AfD members spoke out against it. Ten days after the event, windows were broken at the bookstore and an incendiary device was placed in a Neukölln café.

The right-wing extremist attacks in Neukölln continued unabated this year. Around 1,000 people demonstrated against right-wing violence at the end of June. Earlier, SS symbols had been smeared on the facade of the Syrian bakery “Damascus” on Sonnenallee and a delivery van parked in front of the shop set on fire. A bakery employee told RBB that this was the seventh attack on the “Damascus.”

The role of the SPD-Left Party-Green Berlin state executive

The facts known so far are certainly only the tip of the iceberg. Information that could reveal the true extent of right-wing extremist terror and the complicity of the authorities remains under wraps. The Criminal Investigation Department’s 50-page interim report from February was classified as secret, which the interior senator justified with the words,

“We have to protect the ongoing investigations.”

Against the background of the latest revelations, it is clear that the SPD-Left Party-Green Senate (state executive) is deliberately trying to prevent evidence of right-wing extremist penetration of the authorities from coming to light. The seriousness of the situation is proven by the fact that the Attorney General’s Office has now taken over the investigation. The aim is not to uncover but to cover up the extreme right-wing structures.

Koppers was vice president of the Berlin police force from 2010 to 2018, when she was appointed attorney general—in a period in which xenophobic and anti-Semitic crimes increased massively, neo-Nazis were able to carry out their mischief under the eyes of the police and the increasing of police powers was being promoted in Berlin.

Moreover, the transfer of the two public prosecutors is not an isolated case. The influence of the AfD in the judiciary was already evident years ago in the case of Roman Reusch. The AfD Brandenburg executive member was appointed chief public prosecutor in Berlin in 2016. Since February 1, 2018, he has been an elected member of the federal Parliamentary Control Committee, which is supposed to monitor the secret services. This gives the right-wing extremist lawyer access to secret information and internal information of the Federal Intelligence Service, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and the Military Counter-Intelligence Service.

When Berlin’s Justice Senator Dirk Behrendt of the Green Party, Interior Senator Geisel of the SPD and several representatives of the Left Party now pretend to be outraged and call for a committee of inquiry or special investigators in the Neukölln complex, they are primarily trying to divert attention from their own responsibility and prevent any real investigation.

The SPD-Left Party-Green state executive has been promoting right-wing extremism for years and is pursuing AfD policy on the central issues. Amid the pandemic, it is deporting refugees and only in July passed an even harsher police law. Left Party, Green and SPD politicians are constantly shouting for a strengthening of the police. The Berlin police regularly use brutal force against left-wing demonstrators, for example, during the protests following the murder of George Floyd, or last Friday, during the eviction of the left-wing Neukölln pub “Syndikat.” Berlin’s Office for the Protection of the Constitution, which criminalizes left-wing organizations, also placed the “Ende Gelände” climate movement under observation last year.

Nowhere is this right-wing policy pursued more openly than at Berlin’s Humboldt University, where the Senate and university management under SPD politician Sabine Kunst are making pacts with the AfD and right-wing extremists. A prime example is Professor Jörg Baberowski, a right-wing extremist ideologue who relativizes Nazi crimes and attacks left-wing students verbally and physically. At the behest of the AfD, Kunst sued the RefRat student activist body in 2018 forcing it to provide the right-wing extremist party with lists of names of student representatives from the last 10 years. The instruction to file the suit came directly from State Secretary Steffen Krach (SPD).

What drives the ruling class and its ideologists is the fear of growing protests against social inequality, the shift to the right and militarism. That is why it is arming the state apparatus and encouraging radical right-wing forces, which in case of doubt, serve as a battering ram against the working class.

Right-wing terror cannot, therefore, be banished by appeals to the establishment parties and calls for an official committee of inquiry. That would mean setting the cat among the pigeons. What is necessary is to eliminate the social causes of the right-wing shift: the bankrupt capitalist system that gives birth to war and fascism.

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