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www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

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By Ulrich Rippert

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Was the hack of German politicians data supported by the state?

News broke at the beginning of January that personal and political data from German politicians, well-known musicians, and journalists was stolen and published online. According to current figures, 994 active or former politicians have been affected by the hack.

The main content of the leaks was personal contact information, including phone numbers and addresses, as well as internal party documents like application letters to party congresses. In a few cases, highly sensitive personal information was made public, including pictures from personal ID cards, documents confirming direct debit payments from bank accounts, chats with family members, and credit card details of relatives. Some of the documents are several years old.

The data was published before Christmas on Twitter in the style of an advent calendar. The account which published the data has more than 17,000 followers. Personal details from celebrities have been repeatedly published there since 2017. Media reports have noted that multiple copies have been made of the data, making it almost impossible to delete.

At a press conference on Tuesday, federal Interior Minister Horst Seehofer (Christian Social Union, CSU) announced that the security agencies would take tougher measures in response to the hack. “The investigators responsible are working at top speed,” he said. A suspect has already been questioned and is cooperative, he added. The suspect is a 20-

year-old student from the state of Hesse. The Interior Minister praised the “swift investigation,” and thanked the security agencies for “good and rapid cooperation.”

In the future, the cyber-security sector would be a focus around the clock, Seehofer declared. A new draft security law is almost complete and will be presented in the first half of 2019, he added. The Federal Agency for Security (BSI) will hire more personnel. The qualifications of BSI workers will also be reviewed more closely and improved in the future.

Seehofer said nothing about the fact that signs point to far-right forces around the Alternative for Germany (AfD) being involved in the attack. And it is well known that the right-wing party enjoys strong support from the security agencies.

A glance at the facts suggests that the data hack was part of the political conspiracy which the federal government has used to impose its policies of militarism and the strengthening of the repressive state apparatus to suppress all opposition in the population.

Firstly, it is noteworthy that of all the parties represented in parliament, only politicians from one remained unaffected by the hack: the AfD. 56 percent of parliamentary deputies, or a total of 398, have been affected, including 204 from the CDU/CSU, 90 from the SPD, 47 from the Left Party, 31 from the Greens, and 26 from the Free Democrats, but not a single one of the AfD’s 91 deputies.

The source of the attack also points to far-right circles. *Die Zeit* has carefully examined the case, and came to the conclusion, “It is not yet possible to say who exactly was responsible for stealing the data. But the people associated with the accounts provide further indications that those responsible are active in right-wing politics. The main account, 0 rbit, participated in right-wing extremist discussions on Twitter.”

According to *Die Zeit*, other far-right accounts have ties to the main account, including AN_Ofiziell (anonymousness), which is active in right-wing politics and presents itself as part of the Anonymous hacker group. The twin account anonymousnews.ru was also connected to the main account. The suspected person behind the account is a right-wing extremist from Erfurt who was sentenced to two years and ten months in prison in December 2018 due to illegally trading weapons. The man filed an appeal against the ruling and is currently free under strict police surveillance.

Julian Reichelt, editor-in-chief of the *Bild* newspaper, pointed to another aspect of the case Tuesday that undermines the official narrative of a lone 20-year-old student living out his fantasies of unlimited power online. It concerns the huge set of data he is currently reviewing and analysing with a trained team of specialist investigative reporters. “This

wasn't one or two boys eating pizza and drinking cola in a basement. It must have been a larger structure. The most likely explanation is that there was state support for this hack, regardless of where it came from," Reichelt explained.

The *Bild* editor-in-chief indicated that a state "possibly with subversive intent," tried to undermine the Federal Republic, but then wrote, "According to the investigators, there is no political motivation, nobody pulling the strings from Russia, China, or another country."

The question is therefore posed: was the data hack organized by the AfD's far-right network, which reaches deep into the state's security apparatus and is used by the government to enforce its right-wing, anti-social, and militarist policies?

The right-wing extremist networks, which are present in all parts of the state apparatus, are well known.

Last summer, the head of the domestic intelligence agency, Hans-Georg Maassen, was removed from his post after defending neo-Nazi marchers in Chemnitz.

In its latest report, the domestic intelligence agency neglects to mention the AfD, even though it regularly agitates against immigrants, promotes racism, and trivialises the Nazis' crimes and the Wehrmacht. By contrast, the Socialist Equality Party (SGP) is named in the report as a "left-wing extremist" party, with the justification that it criticises the capitalist system.

In the army, a neo-Nazi network was discovered when the terrorist plans of Franco A. were accidentally revealed. The army officer, who had procured firearms and apparently planned attacks on high-ranking politicians, had registered himself as a Syrian refugee. He seemingly planned to blame his crimes on refugees. Nonetheless, the Frankfurt Court of Appeals saw no reason to press charges against him.

When *Focus* magazine published new details in November about the "conspiratorial network of around 200 soldiers in the army," other media outlets ignored the revelation and the issue was quickly dropped.

A far-right cell in the police in Frankfurt was recently exposed, which described itself as "NSU 2.0"—a reference to the neo-Nazi National Socialist Underground terrorist group.

The existence of a right-wing conspiracy within the state apparatus is thus not the product of conspiracy theories, but bitter reality.

This is the context within which the political campaign to defend the AfD which began immediately after the data leak must be understood. A violent attack on the leader of the right-wing party in Bremen served as the pretext for politicians to line up with statements

of solidarity for the AfD. On Tuesday morning, contrary to all the facts, a report was spread claiming that the AfD member was beaten severely by three masked individuals with a wooden baton.

Later, after footage from security cameras was reviewed, it was confirmed that the AfD politician was pursued by three men, who attacked him from behind. A spokesman for the Bremen state prosecutor stated that the pictures showed “nobody kicking someone lying on the ground,” and nobody striking the victim with an object.

Despite this, media outlets have reported the attack as an attempted murder, and all parties have declared their support for and solidarity with the AfD.