

Friday, 04. August 2000

---

## Berlin's Right Wingers Bet on Spontaneous Violence

*Von Dirk Banse und Michael Behrendt*

Attacks on foreigners and defilings of Jewish graves in Berlin are usually committed by rightwing culprits, who are not involved in the organized scene of rightwing extremism. As the Berlin Morgenpost has learned from the Office for the Protection of the Constitution and from police circles, such crimes are usually spontaneous and carried out by drunken youths. So far there has been no evidence of planned violence up to murder.

However, the responsible officers know about "black lists", bearing the names of leftwing politicians, police officers and journalists. One investigator: "But these aren't death lists. We have no concrete evidence that those persons are in danger."

For the Office for the Protection of the Constitution, which was ordered by the Senator for the interior Eckart Werthebach to observe and fight rightwing extremism and neo-Nazis more intensively, those spontaneous infringements are a serious problem. "Such deeds are therefore not predictable for our undercover agents. On contrast to that, we do know exactly what is being planned and going on in the organized scene", explains a coworker of the intelligence agency.

One problem for the Office for the Protection of the Constitution is the current repressive intervention of the police against "rightwingers". "If we have infiltrated a neo-Nazi group of 40 members with one agent, and this group is immediately destroyed by the police, we lose our information. Therefore, a coordination with the police is very important in this area", concurs an intelligence agent. The police, however, has no choice but to act immediately. "If we learn from the constitution protectors about a planned rightwing action, we are forced by law to intervene", explains a policeman.

Both branches of law enforcement agree that the rightwing scene is politically illiterate. There are hardly any intellectuals. They also report that there are no recognizable tendencies which could lead to social acceptance. The protectors of the constitution: "A Jörg Haider such as in Austria is not in sight at the moment. The organized scene in Berlin evinces no political groupings which can be taken seriously. We do, however, continue to monitor closely to see if it stays that way."

Nevertheless, the media and the police officials are still convinced that rightwing extremism is a great and present danger in Germany. "Fertile ground does exist. Unfortunately, many citizens think in the same terms expressed by the right wingers. We have to start with school children and explain what evil the Nazis brought into the world. Rightwing extremism is not just a problem for the security organizations, it is a problem of the whole society."

© Berliner Morgenpost 2001  
[underlining added]