

German Domestic Intelligence Is Running Hundreds of Fake Right-wing Extremist Social Media Accounts

The operation involving fake right-wing accounts has become so big that information sharing is necessary so authorities do not target each other

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Global Research, September 21, 2022

[REMIX News](#) 20 September 2022

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#)

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Hundreds of the radical Nazis and right-wing extremists online are actually German domestic intelligence agents, and many of them may be responsible for “inciting hatred” and even violence. These agents, who once needed to drink and directly socialize with members of the extreme right to gain information on their targets, are now running right-wing extremist accounts online in Germany.

Germany’s Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) argues that these accounts are needed to effectively monitor the extreme right, but critics say that they may also be promoting and actively encouraging radicalism, according to a report from German newspaper Süddeutsche Zeitung.

“This is the future of information gathering,” an unnamed head of a relevant state office told Süddeutsche Zeitung.

Hunderte rechtextremer Fake Accounts führt der [#Verfassungsschutz](#) inzwischen.

„Das ist die Zukunft der Informationsbeschaffung“, sagt ein Leiter eines Landesamts für Verfassungsschutz.

Kleiner Recherche-□

— Ronen Steinke (@RonenSteinke) [September 18, 2022](#)

According to research by the newspaper, the authority has invested heavily in “virtual agents” since 2019, which it finances with taxpayers’ money. Both the federal office and the

federal states employ spies, who besides right-wing extremists, are also tasked with keeping an eye on left-wing extremists, Islamists, and the “conspiracy-ideological” scene.

However, the activities of the BfV running hundreds of right-wing extremist accounts have come to light at the same time that Germany’s left-wing government has labeled right-wing extremism the biggest threat to the country, [despite data showing that left-wing extremists and radical Islam pose bigger threats](#). The country’s interior minister, Nancy Faeser, has launched a [10-point plan](#) to fight “right-wing extremism,” and much like the Biden administration in the United States, has turned the domestic security state against political opponents as well as labeling them terrorism threats and a danger to democracy. In Germany’s case, the opposition conservative Alternative for Germany party (AfD) is [actively surveilled in certain federal states](#), with membership in the party the only prerequisite for agents being able to read emails and listen in on telephone calls of these private citizens.

With the BfV operating hundreds of right-wing extremist accounts, the agency argues that it is about “playing a little right-wing radical yourself” in order to gain the trust of other users. The employees of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution are likely to conduct “propaganda” for this and sometimes also commit crimes such as “incitement to hatred.”

However, what exactly these extremist accounts are posting that involve “incitement to hatred” is unclear, as there is little to no public oversight regarding these activities.

“In order to be really credible, it is not enough to share or like what others say, you also have to make statements yourself. That means that the agents also bully and agitate,” says the report of an agent who claims to have joined the agency to “do something against right-wing extremists.” This involves actively encouraging people in their worldview, but she says it is her job to “feed” the scene.

In fact, there are now so many accounts operated by different German authorities that a nationwide agreement has become necessary. Otherwise, these different agents would be targeting each other with surveillance and monitoring.

Germany’s new government has taken an aggressive stance [against anonymity on the web](#) and free speech, and has [targeted apps like Telegram](#), which is one of the few tech companies openly supporting free speech. Under a new regime, the German government is [expected to open thousands of hate speech cases](#) against the public every year.

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