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A new kind of cult?
The "Reich Citizens' movement" and their ideological / philosophical background

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure for me to speak today at the FECRIS conference here in Copenhagen. Mr. Andreas Stoch, minister of Education, Youth and Sports and member of our regional parliament, wishes this conference great success.

The subject "Reich Citizens' Movement" and the occurrence of ideologically coined groups that partly have an ideological proximity to the far-right political scene touches on sensitive political areas. In Germany, State Security also deals with this issue as does the Federal Office and the Regional Offices for the Protection of the Constitution.

In my short report I will confine myself only to the problem description. It will be the task of the constitutional protection authorities in Germany, but also of appropriate agencies in the different European countries, to examine the facts I have outlined, to analyse further developments and to keep an eye on them. This of course is true for all professional institutions, which deal with ideological and world view issues and with the occurrence of neo-religious or pseudo-religious bodies in society.

Still, I think that the points which I present here will be of interest to you and may be valuable for further discussions on the whole subject.

1. The Reich Citizens' Movement - development, structures and splinter groups

The phenomenon of the so-called Reich Citizens' Movement, alias the "Provisional Reich Government" has been under observation for quite some time. Its followers consider that the Federal Republic of Germany and its actual frontiers have no legal existence. Some splinters also show actual evidence of right-wing extremist tendencies.

The "Reich Citizens' Movement" originated in a group with the name "Provisional Government of the German Reich", which was founded in 1985 by the Berlin citizen Gerhard Guenter Ebel. According to the "Reich Citizens' Movement", the German Reich continues to exist with the borders of 31 December 1937. The Weimar Constitution of 1919 is considered as still valid. This view is also known as "imperial ideology".

A large number of groups, organisations and individuals who are committed to the "Reich Citizens' Movement" now exist. They manifest themselves by sending e-mails and letters to the authorities. In these messages, they indicate that the Allied Forces continue to be responsible for Germany and that the laws of the Federal Republic of Germany are not valid.

When in September 2001, open disagreement within the "Reich Citizens' Movement" broke out, various splinter groups were formed. The followers of the "Reich Citizens' Movement" appeared and continue to show up under many names. The following list is not exhaustive:

- "German Reich"
- "Reich Movement - New Community of Philosophers"
- Central Council of European Citizens (ZEB)
- European Centre for Human Rights in the German Empire State (EZMR)
- German Office for Human Rights
- Help for Victims of Justice/circular care
- Germanites
- Global Association of German citizens (WVDSB)
- Proclamation of natural individuals as citizens of the German Reich in self-government
- Popular movement - the German People
- United self-governments
- Republic Free Germany
- New Germany
- German Police's Fund (DPHW)
- The Germany Project?
- Assistance for Victims of Justice (JOH)

2. The situation in Baden-Württemberg

In an expertise for the government of Baden-Württemberg, I made the following current representation regarding the so-called Reich Citizens' Movement:

Since early December 2010, in Baden-Württemberg many governmental bodies almost daily receive applications from "Germanites". It is up to 30 fax pages of wide-ranging material. The "letter-head" carry different designations such as "Germanites", "GSD / GSDI-Trust of the indigenous people in Germanitia" etc. In a fax dated 25 November 2012 from the "interior minister" of Germanitia, emitted from the "Diplomatic Mission of Germanitia" in Filderstadt, it is explained that the territory of "Germanitia" would comprise the territory of "the whole of Germany" within the frontiers of 31 December 1937. The place of a "main embassy", "Westerheim" (Alb-Donau-Kreis) is indicated, a post office box is mentioned in Heilbronn. End of September 2011, a group of 8-10 people who called themselves members of the "State People of Germanitia" attempted to enter, under a some pretext, a service building of the Ministry of Culture. In the bulletins of the "Germanites" they speak about the "indigenous people of Germanites" and that they are "human rights defenders". "Germanitia" apparently evolved from the "precautionary RV ring", which sees itself as a world-view community and relies on Article 140 of the Constitution¹.

3. Ideological orientation and reservoir of far-right esotericism

It can be assumed that the formation of these networks and the creation of various "governments" will continue to be monitored. The risk of establishment of right-wing associations must not be overlooked. This, for example, is reflected by the already long-existing "The Species Community - Germanic faith community for essentially contemporary lifestyle e.V." (GGG-AG), which is under observation by the Office for the Protection of the Constitution. Some groups, including the "Free Republic Uhlenhof", emerging since 2002, openly sympathizes with the world of thought of the so

¹ **Article 140 [Provisions respecting religious societies]**

The provisions of Articles 136, 137, 138, 139, and 141 of the German Constitution of August 11, 1919 shall be an integral part of this Basic Law.

called nationalist-racist movement and is a breeding ground for ideologies as represented by the "Covenant of God-realization (Ludendorff) e.V.". Dubious goals are also pursued by the "Principality of Germania", which became notorious in 2009 in Brandenburg, a reservoir of rightist esotericism and dropouts, conspiracy theoreticians, extremists and Holocaust deniers that could be contributed to the environment of so-called "Provisional Reich Governments" or to the environment of supporters of the ideology of the Reich. In this context, also the movement led by Peter Fitzek is to be seen, which combines esotericism with political ideas about a "New Germany" and, as all other modern "Reich builders", does not regard the Federal Republic of Germany as a legitimate state.

4. Ties to Scientology?

It is precisely this movement that offers, among others, the establishment of "real, autonomous islands of life" as a saving principle, and raises questions, because obviously, for example, links to Scientology followers exist who operate a mail-order book selling in Kirchheim unter Teck and publish the brochure "know more – live better" ("Kent dispatch") (see report of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution of Baden-Württemberg 2007, p 231). There also, topics of alternative medicine were discussed, and alternative ways of life, which at the time, were partially connected with advertising for Scientology concepts. Similarly contacts with one particular author become visible, whom critics accuse of diffusing a conspiracy theory with some anti-Semitic background attacks, and of cooperation with Jan van Helsing alias Udo Holy, a right-wing author of several now banned books, (see "Focus on Esoteric", Hamburg Interior Ministry, 2006, p 223; on the issue of so-called "Reich Citizens' Movements" see response of the Federal Government, Bundestag printed document 17/11970 of 14 January 2013).

5. Digression: The Anti-Censorship Coalition (AZK)

In 2009/2010, inquiries accumulated in Baden-Württemberg about the "Anti-Censorship Coalition (AZK)" and the Anti-Genocide-party (AGP) of the "apostle" Ivo Sasek. Sasek is associated with the international movement "Organic Christ Generation - OCG". The AZK is a forum in which interested parties exchange opinions about relevant topics such as "deadly" cell phone radiation, the "side effects" of homosexuality, "vaccination terrorism", "infertility" by genetic modified food. According to the Swiss journalist Hugo Stamm of the Zurich "Tages-Anzeiger", Sasek is in favour of corporal punishment for children with a stick. "You will save their life", Sasek claims, "bloody welts protect them from hell." Also -recorded, in Baden-Württemberg, the activities of the anti-genocide-party (AGP), allegedly -founded in 2008 by Sasek and his wife in Switzerland. The AGP is fighting against alleged scrutiny by the government and in recent years collected signatures for a referendum against biometric passports. They warned that in the near future people would be watched by implanted chips. It is noteworthy that at an event of the Anti-Censorship Coalition in late October 2010 the former Chairman of Swiss Scientology and actual spokesman of Scientology Germany, Jürg Stettler, was one of the speakers. It has also been revealed that other AZK-speakers such as the conspiracy theorists Jo Conrad or the former member of the Unification Church of Sun Myung Moon, Hans Tolzin, in the last few years were again and again in contact with a Scientologist known under the pseudonym "Michael Kent" and cooperate with the association "New Impulses Meeting Point", founded by "Kent".

6. How important is the "new religious mythologizing" of Germanic pagan religions?

A particular problem is posed by groups that have a totalitarian character and behave aggressively. The racist, xenophobic and right-wing ideology, which in the form of ideological clichés determines the ideas in various smaller groups from the area of so-called "brown" esotericism, has

to be regarded with particular attention. It can not be excluded that from relatively closed forums, small groups and individuals, a mythologizing of old pre-Christian ("pagan" / "Germanic") religions is represented, caring for an ariosophic thinking, which is dominated by ethnic nationalism and racism. Often, the belief propagated in these circles is connected to spiritual and occult elements and is "new religiously" embellished. In such milieus, that at least in their ideological orientation are close to the extreme right, docking facilities to the controversial "Germanic New Medicine" (GNM) of the former doctor Ryke Geerd Hamer, are to be seen. This makes it clear that the cause of radical right also includes areas that are attributable to the action of so-called sects and psycho-groups. Increasing activity of Neo-Germanic cult groups and neo-pagan initiatives combined with appropriate events such as solstice celebrations and the "initiation" into corresponding mythological symbols and signs are central.

7. Government handling of the "Reich Citizens' Movement"

On dealing with the "Reich Citizens' Movement", the constitution protection authority of Brandenburg has published information on 13 April 2012 and on 24 January 2013 (available on the website www.verfassungsschutz-brandenburg.de in the menu item "News Archive"). Therein, the following guide linrs are given:

- It is pointless to argue with "Reich citizens", because "Reich citizens" are pursuing the goal to create confusion in order to distract authorities from required legal action.
- Insults, threats and other criminal behaviour of "Reich citizens" should be immediately reported to law enforcement authorities.
- Material of "Reich citizens" with right-wing extremist content should be sent to the Office for the Protection of the Constitution.

8. Conclusions and perspectives

My presentation should have made it clear: behind a right-wing "Reich Citizens' Movement" and behind "brown" Esoteric, threats to the internal security of the State are to be recognized. There is thus a risk that "radicalized lone assassins" might commit similar crimes as on 22 July 2011 in Oslo and on the island of Utøya. The "Reich citizens", fragmented into several small groups, see themselves as a self-appointed ideological community. According to news reports, threatening letters to Jewish and Islamic communities have become known in which "space, nature and culture aliens" are asked to leave, to the point of threatening to shoot them (!). Yet the Constitution Protection Services in Germany estimate a low three-digit number of the adherents of these groupings as extremists.