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Politics

Revelations about the terrorist trial in Frankfurt, the first in Europe

Agents Provocateurs?
by Werner Ruf

Eyes closed or eyes open, the terrorist trial was complex

As the trial against a group of moslems began on 16th April, 2002 at the OLG (High Court) in Frankfurt am Main, the event furnished the media with headlines about the very first Al Qaida trial in Europe. It ended unspectacularly with the conviction of the accused to long prison sentences for "premeditated murder with explosives".

Nasrin Parsa, member of the exil-Iranian Writers' Association as well as of the PEN-Club, has followed the trial as a free-lance journalist of the Hessischer Rundfunk (Hessen Broadcasting Company in Germany). Her suspicion was awoken by inconsistencies in the presentation of evidence as well as the "disappearance" of important witnesses from the Islamistic scene. Why, for example, did France refuse to extradite two important witnesses for the trial, who were imprisoned under suspicion of terrorist activities? Who was the misterious Muthanna, alias Kamal Cherif, whose real name was most probably Mabrouk Echiker? He was in constant contact with several of the accused and was very near to the flat of the accused when they were arrested. He flew then immediately to France. One man was known to have left Algeria in the year 2000, where he had fought in the paramilitary Islamic groups (GIA). This led to the connection with a highly complex and volatile scene: The GIA, who did not only spread terror and fear throughout Algeria. Nasrin Parsa mentions the bomb attacks in the Paris Metro in the summer of 1995, which were attributed to the GIA. But who are they?

Many clues suggest that the GIA or at least some of their confederates were spies from the Algerian military intelligence who organised the attacks as agent provocateurs, in order to stir up anti-Islamic

hysteria in France as well as to force the government to support the military government in Algeria. Why was this evidence not investigated by the court of law? The French investigations show the connection to be indisputable. Also ex-colonel Mohamed Samraoui who deserted from the Algerian Security Agency in Berlin, has confirmed that in actual fact the perpetrator of these attacks was the Algerian Secret Service.

Parsa's references about the Islamic organisation in Great Britain and their involvement with the British MI5 and MI6 services are clearer. The Islamic agitators in Britain, who in turn had connections to the departments there. They travelled via London to Pakistan and from there to training camps in Afghanistan. Also the BND's (National German Press Agency) connections to the Pakistani Secret Service, ISI, and to the Russian KGB and their contacts to the Islamic scene are not omitted.

The indisputable facts of the matter are that the accused belonged to the Islamic scene and that some were in Strasburg where they made films. But, did they really want to lay bombs in the busy Christmas market or ("only"?) want to blow up an empty Synagogue. Above all: Were they working alone or were they working to a plan, hatched out at a higher level? Why were the numerous connections of the accused to such dubious organisations abroad as the CIA not isolated and systematically investigated. Because of this, the connections of the middle-men to the press agencies remained obscure. On that score the collected information of one of the defence-council in the trial, the Frankfurt lawyer reiner Koch, was revealing in it's documentary form. In addition to other points of interest, he correctly criticised the unprofessional handling by the BKA (inner-German police force), which complicated the line of argumentation to no small degree.

This book also shows the press coverage in Germany in a bad light: Due to the fact that Nasrin Parsa was born in Iran, she was suspected of having sympathy with the accused. One of her planned interviews for "Report Mainz" was given to another colleague. Her report would possibly not have been sensational enough. Blatant sensationalism

such as speculation about an association between the trials and the kidnapping of tourists in Algeria provoked high viewing figures.

In the face of the mass of important information and highly complex connections, it is unfortunate that this book is occasionally not easy to follow. More thorough editorial work would have been appreciated. What still remains are the questions. The trial itself has not brought up anything new. It remains uncertain if it would have come to an actual crime as the accused were under constant surveillance by the secret services. In addition: Does the secret service work for the good of the people, or does it have a life of its own? In the light of current CIA and BND affairs, the role and value of secret services need to be reconsidered in a democracy.

Nasrin Persa: Terrorists or Puppets of the Secret Service?
Zambon Verlag, Frankfurt am Main 2006.
252p., br., EURO 13.80.