

# **ALEXEI NAWALNY - GUEST OF THE FEDERAL CHANCELLOR**

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By **Karl Bernd Esser**.

When Russian opposition leader Alexei Nawalny was brought to Germany in a private jet and ZDF then presented him as a guest of the chancellor (1), German media and politicians were already certain that Russian President Putin had Nawalny poisoned. It will remain that way, something else was and is not to be expected from the West or from Germany.

The German mainstream media outbid one another with groundless accusations against Russia. Without presenting any real proof, these accusations are carried out by Germany all over the world. Putin, the sole ruler, is said to have ordered to poison Kremlin critic Alexei Nawalny with the nerve poison Novichok.

As if there were no other way to get rid of the Russian opposition leader Nawalny inconspicuously, the FSB ( Federal Security Service) is said to have used a well-known nerve poison that is supposed to exist only in Russia. But this is not quite true, because the German BND, the CIA in the USA, Sweden and also other NATO partners are in possession of the nerve poison which was originally produced in Russia.

### **The history of the agent Novichok**

In the 1970s, the Soviet Army began to develop its own warfare agent, Novichok (in German: Novitschok), as a reaction to chemical weapons programs of the USA. By 1990, the USA had produced a comparable warfare agent called "BIGEYE". It is a so-called binary warfare agent consisting of different components. It is said to be several times more toxic than better known nerve toxins such as VX (2). People who come into contact with them are attacked by uncontrolled muscle contractions (3). If there is no rapid treatment - for example with atropine, as is now the case with Nawalny - the victims suffocate or die of cardiac arrest.

Novichok is a hardly detectable, highly potent nerve poison that can be stored relatively safely. The average lethal dose of Novichok on skin contact is about one milligram, making it one of the most potent nerve poisons of all. The components of Novichok are stored in powder form, which makes them very storable. Because they consist of basic substances that are also used in agriculture, the weapons programs were relatively easy to conceal:

(translation)

"The research program was designed to conceal the production of the chemicals under the guise of

legitimate, commercial production," says the former head of the Russian state research institute for organic chemistry and technology, Vil Mirsyanov.

In February 1995, Vil Mirsyanov traveled to Princeton, USA, where he received a prize, the Scientific Freedom and Responsibility Award. A little later he emigrated and settled in Princeton, where he married the human rights activist Gale Colby, who had previously stood up for him. He was offered a position at the US chemical weapons research laboratory in Eaglewood. However, according to Vil Mirsyanov, who now lives in the United States and works with the CIA, the USSR did not fully adhere to the Chemical Weapons Convention. These new substances were tested between 1988 and 1993 in specialized factories in Russia and Uzbekistan. According to Mirsyanov, the military included at least two Novichok variants in its arsenal of chemical weapons, if one is to believe his statement.

Some basic materials of the Novichok variants, such as A-232 (Novichok-5) are not explicitly listed in the Chemical Weapons Convention either, since Russia never officially declared them. As late as 2013, the Scientific Advisory Board of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons expressed its concern about the Novichok substances. At the same time, it had too little information to make a serious assessment of the threat they pose. Whether Russia continues to hoard supplies is as unknown as their possible size. But since the substance was only produced in experimental quantities, the renegade traitor to Russian state secrets, Vil Mirsyanov, assumed in 1995 that only a few dozen tons had been produced.

In April 1987, Soviet General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev publicly declared that the Soviet Union would stop producing chemical weapons and convert its existing chemical military facilities to civilian use. Despite Gorbachev's promises, the Soviet Union continued the secret development and testing of binary Novichok warfare agents. In 1989 and 1990, open-air tests with Novichok-5 took place on the Ustyurt plateau at the Aral Sea. Even after the program had become known in the early 1990s, it was nevertheless further developed. Until 1999 new versions were developed leading to the declared Novichok-9.

Nowitschok-8 and Nowitschok-9 were further developed and produced, among others in Uzbekistan. However, Uzbekistan only learned of the Russian chemical weapons program on its territory after its independence from the Soviet Union. In 1993, the last Russian scientists left the experimental plant in Nukus in the north of the country. Uzbekistan subsequently negotiated with the United States to obtain assistance with dismantling and decontamination. In 1999, American specialists were involved in dismantling and decontaminating the Nukus facility. They were able to

take various Novichok variants to the USA for their research purposes without any problems. In concrete terms, this means that the CIA has almost certainly also been in possession of Russian Novichok variants since 1999.

According to media reports from May 2018 (4), the German secret service BND had also obtained a sample of one of Novichok's variants as early as the early 1990s by guaranteeing a Russian scientist and his family the right of residence in Germany in exchange for the sample. Chancellor Helmut Kohl was informed, next to only a few other people. To avoid legal and political concerns, the sample was not kept, but analyzed in Sweden under strict secrecy. The results were then communicated to the closest Western allies. The wife of the Russian scientist, who was spying for the BND, hid a NOWITSCHOK sample in a box of chocolates and took it to Sweden in a passenger plane. The woman had relatives there, so the trip was not noticed. The handover was organized by the Swedish security police Säpo, who then took the chocolates by train about a thousand kilometers further to the chemical weapons center in northern Sweden.

### **Possible use of NOWITSCHOK**

Novichok is said to have already been used in the poison attack on the former double agent Sergei Skripal in 2018. The 69-year-old was poisoned in the English town of Salisbury with his daughter Julia. Both survived the attack after weeks of coma and have since disappeared from the scene. The British chemical weapons research center Porton Down, like the German Armed Forces, identified a substance from the Novichok group as the cause of the almost fatal poisoning. The attack caused a serious crisis in relations between Russia, Great Britain and the EU. Nowitschok is always supposed to represent the "Russian fingerprint" of these attacks, but whether this is actually how it happened remains hidden to this day.

### **The current case of Alexei Nawalny**

Nawalny has shown the clinical signs of poisoning. There is still no official medical report that in any way suggests or ultimately proves the assumption that poison was introduced from outside. Nevertheless, the spokesman of the Federal Government Seibert claimed at a federal press conference on September 2, 2020, that there is now "unequivocal proof" of poisoning with a chemical nerve agent from the Novichok Group (5). The Russian government, for its part, has described the assessment of the Berlin Charité as premature and is still waiting for the findings from Berlin.

### **Who pays Nawalny's bills in Germany**

Nawalny's bills are paid by an NGO banned in Russia, the ZIMIN-FOUNDATION, which appears as a donor to the German CINEMA FOR PEACE FOUNDATION in Berlin (6). Its founder is the Slovenian film producer Jaka Bizilj. Since 2002, he and his foundation have been organizing political actions in addition to film projects, such as the 2016 event with Chinese dissident Ai Weiwei (7).

Where the money needed comes from, the 49-year-old usually leaves in doubt. Two years ago Pjotr Wersilow, a pussy-riot activist, came to Berlin from Moscow in an ambulance jet, also with severe symptoms of poisoning, through the mediation of the Berlin CINEMA FOR PEACE FOUNDATION (8). He was released after two weeks. Now Jaka Bizilj confirmed that the Russian businessman Boris Zimin had assumed the costs for the transport from Nawalny (9).

Obviously the heavily wealthy Russian family Zimin financially supports the Russian opposition and thus also its leader Nawalny. Therefore I would like to take a closer look at these Russian supporters with contacts to the Federal Chancellery:

Dr. Borisovich Zimin is the founder and honorary president of VIMPELCOM (Vimpel Communications), the first Russian company to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) in 1996 by going public. VIMPELCOM built the first mobile telephone network in Moscow. Among other things, Dr. Zimin was the chief designer of the Moscow missile early warning station with the Russian name "DON-2N-Radar", in NATO jargon called "PILLBOX" in 1986. VIMPELCOM (now Telecom Group VEON) currently operates under the name BEELINE in 10 countries (Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Algeria) and serves about 214.4 million customers. The annual turnover in 2019 was 8.86 billion US dollars. The company is one of the largest providers in Russia with 27,000 employees and has around 4,500 stores in the above-mentioned countries.

Dr. Zimin sold his majority stake in Vimpelcom in 2001. Since then, he has devoted most of his time to philanthropic activities, including the establishment of the Dimitry Zimin Dynasty Foundation in 2002. Historically, the Zimin family has focused its philanthropic activities on Russia, where the Dimitry Zimin Dynasty Foundation initially operated until the end of 2015. The Foundation's priorities have been to develop and promote basic scientific research and teaching in Russia. The creation of conditions for scientists to research and teach at home in Russia, the popularization of science and civic education.

This Foundation was the first private Russian non-profit foundation to support and, above all, promote science and education in modern Russia. In February 2015, Dr. Zimin received the award

"For Loyalty to Science" from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. The minor planet 315493 Zimin is named after Dimitry Zimin. Already in 2007 Dr. Zimin transferred almost 90% of his assets to the Zimin Foundation, which is legally registered as a Zimin Trust in British Bermuda. The Zimin Foundation is registered in Bermuda in the Commercial Register under registration number 50417. The directors are his son Boris and Dr Zimin.

In May 2015, Zimin, Sr. announced the termination of funding of the Dynasty Foundation and its closure in Moscow after the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation added the Dynasty Foundation to the Register of Non-Profit Organizations (NGO). Topic: Tax evasion and financing from abroad.

In the meantime, the Russian government had enacted a controversial NGO law, in which it explicitly assessed and listed Zimin's Dynasty Foundation as a "foreign agent". The reason given was Dynasty's support for the organization Liberal Mission, which in 2014 gave lectures on modern politics in Russia with Alexei Nawalny, among others. The funding came from the Zimin Foundation, which was relocated abroad. The law came into force in November 2012, but was only actively enforced when Vladimir Putin instructed law enforcement officials to implement it accordingly during a speech to members of the Russian domestic intelligence service FSB on Valentine's Day 2013:

(translation)

"Any direct or indirect interference in our internal affairs, any pressure on Russia, our allies and partners is unacceptable."

The new Zimin Foundation in Bermuda continues these activities to some extent. However, it is currently not limited to Russia, but is expanding its activities to various countries. International projects supported by the Zimin Foundation in the fields of public health care, science, education and culture include Ariel University (in Israel since October 27, 2016), the Faculty of Molecular and Theoretical Biology (including possible warfare agent research), Tel Aviv University (TAU) and others. Thus the ZIMIN INSTITUTE was founded as part of Tel Aviv University (TAU). The Zimin Institute for Technical Solutions was inaugurated in the presence of Dr. Dimitry Zimin and his son Boris in November 2018.

### **Reactions of German politics to the poison attack**

The German Chancellor Angela Merkel can imagine a common European reaction to the possible

poisoning of Nawalny, quote:

(translation)

"We will also try this when we have more clarity about the background. Merkel pointed out that "such a reaction also occurred in the poison attack on the Russian ex-double spy Sergei Skripal in Great Britain. At that time, almost 30 Western allies expelled Russian diplomats."

Norbert Röttgen (CDU), member of the "Foreign Affairs Committee" and "Atlantic Bridge" explained in the ARD program of ANNE WILL on September 6: "As punishment for the attempted murder of Nawalny, he could imagine stopping the completion of the NORD STREAM 2 natural gas pipeline". However, Röttgen was also unable to present evidence for his accusation against Russia. "Germany should give up this "unecological project", even if there will be claims for damages", said the Green Party boss Annalena Bärbock on 7 September on ZDF-MOMA to the ZDF breakfast television channel and the FDP, as the "eternal political free rider", jumped on this sanction train with the parliamentary group vice chairman Alexander Graf Lambsdorff (10).

The Novichok attack, which has still not been proven, is now being used by many German politicians to stage a withdrawal from the NORDSTREAM 2 project in favor of the US liquefied gas industry. This staging is being sold to the citizens in the media as the only logical political and economic consequence. Germany is supposed to buy the 10 times more expensive US liquefied petroleum gas in the USA, which is apparently the long-term goal of local politicians, completely in line with the guidelines and ideas from Washington.

After all, German politicians have long since built new port facilities with gas terminals for the US liquefied gas tankers, with the help of our tax money, as a precautionary gift. Just the transport of the liquefied gas by filled ship from the USA to Germany and back empty again will be an ecological disaster. The GREENS have not thought of that. The options of the Federal Government in the Nawalny-Causa are limited: The German Chancellor has maneuvered herself into a dead end in her Russia policy over the last few years.

### **Conclusion:**

Not even Donald Trump accused the Russian government of planning and committing a poison attack on Nawalny. The coming weeks will show whether Russia actually planned and committed the attempted murder of the opposition member. Or whether, as a variable scenario, it was the feigned crime of a Western secret service using "Novichok" or a similar substance "acquired" from

Russia (Uzbekistan).

To date, the German government has not informed its allies, nor Russia, about its laboratory results in the Alexei Nawalny case. Meanwhile the victim, oh miracle of the Charité, has awakened from the coma (11).

Mike Pompeo is still not deterred by the course of this story so far from currently threatening Russia again (12):

(translation)

"US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo sees a reasonable possibility that the Russian government is behind the poisoning of Putin critic Alexei Nawalny. For the Russians this would prove to be "costly"".

The Tagesschau reported yesterday (13):

(translation)

"Case Nawalny - Berlin has no doubt. Very serious questions are now arising, which only the Russian government can and must answer". This was Merkel's announcement to the address of Moscow.

Der Spiegel already knows:

(translation)

"Police tighten security for Nawalny. The condition of the Russian opposition politician Alexei Nawalny is apparently improving visibly. Now, according to information from SPIEGEL and Bellingcat, the police fear further assassination attempts." (14)

It could still become a politically turbulent autumn.

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