

New draconian police law introduced in Germany

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At the same time that new neo-Nazi networks linked to the intelligence services, police and army are being uncovered across Germany, state governments are systematically expanding the powers of all of these forces. In the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the ruling SPD-CDU coalition, headed by Manuela Schwesig (SPD), plans to implement a new, much tougher police law after the summer break.

In common with the new police laws introduced in Bavaria, Baden-Wuerttemberg, Hesse, Brandenburg, North Rhine-Westphalia and Berlin, the so-called Security and Ordinance Act (SOG) in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania will significantly strengthen the police apparatus. It undermines important democratic rights.

One focus of the new law is the use of so-called state trojans, which can be used to spy on the entire digital traffic of a targeted individual. In order to plant the spy software on computers and smartphones, police will be allowed to secretly enter and search apartments to “prepare” their eavesdropping operations. The state trojans can also be used against those who are not accused of any offence and are merely seen as likely to commit a crime in the future.

In Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the police will be able to monitor source telecommunications, making it possible to read texts before encryption, as well as online searches, to gain access to all electronic data stored in a computer or smartphone. “If we are unable to finally acquire the data, the state police can simply shut down their operations,” state Interior Minister Lorenz Caffier (CDU) boasted.

Another important focus of the new law makes clear that the case of Julian Assange is to serve as a role model for suppressing the freedom of the press in Germany. The bill aims to further restrict the right of

journalists to protect their sources and refuse to give evidence. It allows police officers to access journalists’ information, contacts and documents in the event of any “imminent danger” without a court order, thereby endangering both journalists and their sources.

At the end of 2011, the German constitutional court ruled that legislative bodies were not obliged to grant journalists the same protection as clergy, parliamentarians or lawyers. State governments are now using this ruling to justify their new police laws.

According to the new police law internet providers and platforms can be forced to release the data, including passwords and addresses, of “suspicious persons.” Police will also be granted increased powers to deploy undercover agents, control the documents and monitor the homes of people classified as so-called “threats.”

In addition, the new security law permits the use of drones and for police to shoot suspects with a “final rescue shot” should they decide that they, or other persons, are in danger. Last year electronic shackles were already introduced in the state.

Increasingly politicians from parties across the board are putting into practice the program of the xenophobic Alternative for Germany (AfD). They are expanding the powers of state agencies as new details about right-wing extremist networks in the police and army come to light. This is particularly clear in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

On 21 June, the parliament in Schwerin approved the new police law in a first reading. Less than 10 days earlier, the state prosecutor had issued a warrant against four police officers accused of stashing ammunition. One of them, Marko G., is the founder of the terrorist chat group “Nordkreuz.” The public prosecutor in Schwerin ordered a search of 13 premises, including

homes and police stations, and arrested four officers who belonged to, or were formally members of the Special Task Force (SEK) of the state Criminal Investigation Office (LKA). The former SEK policeman Marko G. is also a member of the AfD.

His group “Nordkreuz,” which is part of the so-called “preparers,” is characterised by its ruthlessness. The group has been hoarding weapons, ammunition and supplies and conducting shooting practice to prepare for a “Day X”, i.e. the day when the state will collapse. On this day, the group plans to kill political opponents using lists of 25,000 names of “representatives of the left-wing political spectrum” (as stated in the search warrant). The members of the group are mostly police officers and army soldiers. They are said to have planned to procure 200 body bags and quicklime to dissolve victim’s bodies.

The state government and its Interior Ministry have been aware of the group “Nordkreuz” for a considerable length of time. The house of Marko G. was searched for 11 hours two years ago, but he was then only called as a witness. He has been able to work undisturbed for another two years and expand his huge network, which is linked to far right-wing groups throughout Germany.

Two years ago investigations were already being carried out against two members of the “Nordkreuz” group, a police officer and a right-wing lawyer. The investigating team found weapons and a list of 5,000 names. One of the suspects, the police officer Haik J., an AfD member, was merely suspended from duty. The other, the lawyer Jan-Hendrik Hammer, is apparently still active in the Rostock community; his name appears as a deputy on the website of the right-wing populist list, Independent Citizens for Rostock (UFR).

Jan-Hendrik Hammer joined the UFR while he was a member of the neo-liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) and maintains close ties to the Identitarian Movement (IB). The former AfD state spokesman Holger Arppe (now independent) wrote about Hammer: “The guy would fit perfectly in our ranks. He hates the left, has a well-stocked gun cabinet in the garage and lives by the motto: when the left eventually go completely crazy, I’m prepared.” Referring to some of his colleagues in the Rostock community Hammer said, according to Arppe, “Some people in the citizenry I can only imagine with a hole in their head, I cannot

stand these left-wing pigs.”

The events in Rostock and Schwerin demonstrate the proximity of the AfD to the far-right networks in the police and army. With its new police law, the state government of the SPD and CDU covers up for these forces and at the same time implements AfD policy.

In the past, state Interior Minister Lorenz Caffier had awarded Marko G. a medal as a sports shooter, and Marko was a regular guest on a shooting range where the LKA organised training for special units of the police and army. This shooting range has now also been searched because its manager was probably active in “Nordkreuz.” Despite official requests from state politicians, Caffier has refused to inform those whose names appear on the “enemy” and “death lists.”

The SPD, which heads the state government, also implements this right-wing policy. The police spokesman for the SPD, Manfred Dachner, himself a former police officer, expressly welcomed the extension of powers embodied in the new police law. In order to cast the law in the most favourable light, the SPD has promised to carry out an evaluation in 2024 and then, as it says, perhaps a few measures could be relaxed. However, history has shown that once implemented, such laws are only likely to be further strengthened.

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