

The infrastructure of a police state emerges in Europe

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Former NSA employee Edward Snowden has exposed the infrastructure of a police state whose surveillance powers far exceed those of totalitarian dictatorships such as the German Nazi regime.

American and European intelligence agencies monitor and store the communications data of hundreds of millions of citizens. Based on the metadata of tapped connections, they can draw up a seamless profile of an individual's movements and contacts. This in turn enables them to selectively filter out the content of conversations and emails.

The right to privacy—a basic human right enshrined in the American and every European Constitution—and the associated guarantee of the confidentiality of the post and telecommunications are being ripped to shreds. The wiretaps are so obviously illegal that intelligence agencies in one country often delegate their activities to foreign partners in order to avoid overly blatant violation of their own national laws.

Snowden's revelations represent the tip of the iceberg. They concentrate on his former employer, the National Security Agency (NSA) and its partner organizations—such as the British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), the German Federal Intelligence Service (BND), the French *Direction générale de la sécurité extérieure* (DGSE)—which officially conduct foreign espionage. The activities of military and domestic intelligence agencies, which have access to collected data together with affiliated police departments, have not yet been revealed.

The extent of the monitoring apparatus is gigantic. The US intelligence services alone employ hundreds of thousands of employees. Exact figures are difficult to obtain because they remain secret, but an investigation by the *Washington Post* concluded that in 2010

approximately 854,000 Americans possessed top-secret security clearance. This means that the number of intelligence officials is approximately half the number of the 1.8 million teachers in American primary schools.

In Europe, the numbers of intelligence agency employees is likely to be just as high. Accurate estimates are hard to come by, given the large number of countries and intelligence agencies. In Germany alone, in addition to the BND, other agencies include the Military Counterintelligence Service, the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) and its 16 separate state offices.

The claim that this Orwellian surveillance apparatus is devoted to the struggle against terrorism is absurd. There is no need to monitor hundreds of millions of citizens in order to track down a handful of terrorists, who in many cases have their own links to the intelligence services.

The real target of the intelligence surveillance is the vast majority of the people. This is the real enemy identified by the ruling class. This is confirmed by any brief look at social statistics and the social counterrevolution currently taking place.

In the US, the richest ten percent of the population control more than half of all income and about three quarters of all private assets. At the bottom, the poorest 15 percent of the population live below the official poverty line of \$22,300 annually for a family of four.

In Europe, austerity measures dictated by the EU have resulted in mass unemployment and social decline on an unprecedented scale. After five austerity budgets in Greece, 40 percent of the population are no longer covered by health insurance and therefore not entitled to health care.

The ruling class senses that popular opposition is

growing and is responding by placing the entire population under surveillance. Such surveillance is not limited to passive observation. In the event of an escalation of the class struggle, as is currently occurring in Egypt, the profiles and addresses stored in the vast databases of the intelligence agencies would be mined to draw up lists of dissidents and political leaders for arrest and prosecution.

The ruthlessness of the ruling class is most clearly shown in the case of Edward Snowden. The 30-year-old must fear for his life and is being hunted across the planet because he had the courage to expose the criminal activities of the NSA. The forced landing of Bolivian President Evo Morales in Vienna made clear that even the elected leader of a sovereign state is not safe from the machinations of the US Secret Service and their European accomplices.

The intelligence agencies are also quite prepared to use provocations and acts of terror to further their ends. The secret NATO Gladio organization in Italy was infamous for carrying out such acts of provocation in Italy in the 1970s and 1980s.

The Prime Minister of Luxembourg, Jean-Claude Juncker, is expected to resign today due to a similar case, the so-called “bomb-planting affair”. In Germany, meanwhile, new evidence is continually emerging on the involvement of the Office for the Protection of the Constitution in the racist murders conducted by the National Socialist Underground (NSU).

The case of Edward Snowden contains vital lessons. No confidence can be placed in any of the institutions of the capitalist state—the courts, the political parties, the legislatures, or the capitalist media—to defend basic democratic rights. The ruling elites disregard the most basic rights and are developing police-state methods to defend their wealth and privileges. The defense of democratic rights, along with the struggle against social cuts, can only be carried out on the basis of a mass movement of the working class aimed at overturning the capitalist system.



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