

German Left Party passes anti-democratic police law in Brandenburg

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Last week, the German Left Party voted in the Brandenburg state legislature for a new police law that creates the conditions for the establishment of a police state. Just one member of the Left Party voted against and one abstained.

The law adopted by the ruling Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Left Party allows the police to use hand grenades in the fight against “terrorists” and hold so-called “perpetrators” for weeks in preventive detention. It drastically extends storage periods for surveillance videos. It also equips the police with body cameras and permits nationwide unrestricted vehicle controls on federal highways. In addition, the police will be able to ban individuals from staying in a certain area or order them to report to police even if they have not been accused of a crime.

The *World Socialist Web Site* reported last year in detail on the Berlin SPD-Left Party police law, which adopts the main elements of the notorious Bavarian police law. Employing the nebulous legal conception of “threat” and the possibility of holding someone for up to four weeks in jail “preventively” without the existence of a criminal offense, the red-red Brandenburg state executive now exceeds most other states in anti-democratic measures.

The law so thoroughly exposes the Left Party as a police state party that it is causing unrest in its own ranks. In an open letter to the Left Party group in the Brandenburg state assembly before the vote, 150 members and sympathizers warned that the “credibility” of the Left Party “as a civil rights party” was “in question” because “the red-red state government is planning a law that partly copies its Bavarian counterpart”.

The signatories mention, among other things, the “extension of identity checks without any prior

suspicion, registration requirements in the field of the law of assembly without requiring a judicial decision, preventive detention as well as contact and residence bans without concrete signs of a crime, the extension of storage times for police video surveillance, bodycams, the extension of public searches in the preliminary stages of a suspected criminal offence and the use of hand grenades against persons”. These “extended police powers”, the letter states, could be applied “not only against actual or supposed terrorists, but also against social movements, protests and strikes”.

In fact, the Brandenburg police law is not an exception but only the latest example of the extreme right-wing and anti-working-class policy of the Left Party. Wherever it participates in government, it is strengthening the state’s repressive apparatus and, like all the other bourgeois parties, is preparing to use violence to suppress strikes and protests that develop outside the control of the trade unions.

In Thuringia, where the state premier is a member of the Left Party and the party has more than 30 percent of the state deputies, it is responsible for Germany’s second highest deportation rate and organizes brutal deportations. In the capital, Berlin, it is pursuing the same reactionary politics. After the austerity measures of the red-red Senate (state executive) made Berlin the “capital of poverty”, the current red-red-green state government is massively arming the security authorities and is also preparing a harsher police law.

The next measures are also being planned in Brandenburg. Shortly before the adoption of the Brandenburg Police Act, the Left Party agreed to a deal with the SPD, which aims to increase the staffing of the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution, as the regional branch of the secret service is called. As part of a new law concerning the secret service, the

intelligence agency is to receive almost 40 percent more staff.



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