

# German Social Democrats and “The Left” strengthen domestic security agency

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In March, the state government of Brandenburg, run by a coalition between the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Left Party (Die Linke) tightened existing police law. Now, a few months before the regional elections, the coalition has cleared the way for a reinforcement of the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution in Brandenburg.

Interior Minister Karl-Heinz Schröter (SPD) announced in January that the office of the domestic secret service in Brandenburg should increase its number of posts from 93 to 120. After several weeks of sham debates, the Left Party has agreed on all points. The decisive vote on the law is to take place in June.

In addition to the increase in staff, the state government wants to strengthen the use of police informers and limit parliamentary control. Even the Conservatives (CDU), which sits in the opposition in Brandenburg, criticized the excessive use of informers by the Agency. “With regards to this question, the CDU are further to the left than the SPD-Linke coalition,” noted even the Left Party newspaper *Neues Deutschland*.

In a hearing of the state parliament’s interior committee, data protection officer Dagmar Hartge and Freiburg jurist Benjamin Rusteberg expressed doubts. The bill provides “extremely wide discretionary power to the Constitution Protection Agency,” which could give rise to an “info-regime.”

As far as the use of police informers is concerned, Left Party politicians and Social Democrats are well aware of their true nature. In just one instance, Carsten Sczcepanski aka “Piatto” worked as an informer for Brandenburg’s Constitutional Protection Agency. He was a leading neo-Nazi leader in the 1990s, convicted of attempted murder of a Nigerian, and had close ties to the far-right terrorist National Socialist Underground.

Even since the beginning of the legislative period the SPD and Left Party have agreed on the importance of the domestic security agency. In the coalition’s pact, a section on the “commitment against right-wing extremism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism” states: “The employees of Brandenburg’s Constitutional Protection Agency have an important role to play.”

The police law, to which the SPD and Linke agreed in the spring, allows the authorities to use, among other things, hand grenades in the fight against “terrorists,” weeks of preventive detention for “those posing a threat,” long-term storage rights for surveillance videos while simultaneously providing police officers with body cameras, as well as nationwide vehicle controls on federal roads. In the future, police will additionally be able to issue restraining orders, residency limitations and check-up obligations without any criminal offense having occurred.

What this internal armament means for the public can be deduced from the SPD-Left Party’s approach to refugees in the region. Interior Minister Schröter aims to intensify the deportation of rejected asylum seekers, having them centrally organized by the state in the future. According to information from the Ministry of the Interior, Brandenburg has a total of 6,554 asylum seekers who must leave the country; 5,218 of them currently in the deportation process.

The SPD and the Left Party clearly play a pioneering role in the deportation of refugees to war zones. An example is the “voluntary” departure of a Syrian who had sought refuge in the district of Oberspreewald-Lusatia.

The non-party district administrator Siegurd Heinze boasted to have pressured the “obviously mentally burdened man” to leave, reported a member of the Brandenburg Refugee Council. With the

“disinformation politics in the country and district” the hope is that a mood will be generated that justifies future expulsions of Syrians back to their war-torn country. Heinze had also demanded a “deportation detention facility” for “violent asylum seekers who had been criminally convicted.”

Heinze received backing from district council member Viola Weinert (Left Party). “I think you cannot blame the district here,” she said. “It was a voluntary departure. He was master of his doings.”

The mayor of Frankfurt an der Oder, René Wilke (Left Party), is also known for his rabid line against refugees. Last year he exploited a confrontation in a Frankfurt club as a pretext for a shameless campaign against “offenders from abroad.” He threatened to deport all Syrians involved, and a disproportionately long pre-trial detention was ordered against several participants. They have since been unconditionally released.

Wilke pursues his declared goal of deportation to other war-torn countries such as Syria. Recently, a young Pakistani was also deported from the city council and given a long-term travel ban after serving a term of imprisonment for minor offenses.

Mayor Wilke has also failed to criticize the close ties between the Frankfurt police and the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD). The Greens have filed a complaint against three state police officers for the persecution of innocent people. They accuse AfD Group Chairman Wilko Möller—who is in fact a police officer—of slander and impersonating a public servant.

This conflict broke out after 50 election posters of the AfD were destroyed in September 2017. One-and-a-half years later, the AfD came to the conclusion that the perpetrators were politicians from the Green party, including housing secretary Jörg Gleisenstein. The police had apparently determined this solely on the basis of tips from within the AfD and from Wilko Möller in particular. Documents available to Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg show that Möller sent photos of people to the police and organized dubious witnesses.

The lawyer of the Greens, Sven Hornauf, spoke of “deep and far-reaching violations.” One must assume that there is “some kind of operational AfD grouping” within the state police force.

The ruling SPD-Left Party coalition is covering for the AfD while also implementing the latter’s policies.

It is therefore hardly surprising that the SPD and AfD poll numbers for the regional election on September 1 are almost equal. AfD lead candidate Andreas Kalbitz, a former professional soldier, belongs to the right-wing extremist “völkisch” wing of the AfD. He comes from Munich and was formerly a member of the Junge Union (CDU youth wing), the Bavarian Conservatives and then the Republicans.

The number of radical right-wing activities in Brandenburg has risen rapidly under the SPD-Left Party government. In 2018, according to official figures, 116 right-wing extremist demonstrations, rallies and protests were reported. Among them are more than 50 instances in which the extremists marched through the streets without any intervention by state authorities.



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