

# Berlin state government to expand surveillance powers with the support of the far-right Alternative for Germany

Martin Nowak  
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The amendments to the police law adopted by the Berlin House of Representatives (state legislature) on December 4, with the votes of the Christian Democrats (CDU), Social Democrats (SPD) and the fascistic Alternative for Germany (AfD), undermine fundamental democratic rights. The more than 700-page revision of the General Security and Order Act (ASOG) was presented by the state Interior Ministry in mid-July this year.

The ASOG reform not only creates expanded powers for observation and video surveillance in public spaces, but also legalises the covert entry into homes to install so-called “state trojans” spying software. This goes far beyond previous practice. With judicial authorisation, police officers will in future be permitted to break into dwellings in order to install surveillance software on computers, smartphones and other networked devices.

The state spyware enables access to encrypted messages, the extraction of files, the activation of microphones and cameras, and the monitoring of running applications—all in real time.

At the same time, the reform expands the legal basis for the comprehensive monitoring of telecommunications. With judicial approval, not only ongoing communications but also stored content, metadata and the communications of “contact persons”—so-called bystander collection—can be accessed. In this way, anyone can become a target who happened to be in contact with a person being monitored.

The legislative amendment also grants the police far-reaching technical powers in public spaces. Under the new regulation on mobile phone cell data requests (Section 26e), the police can demand the traffic data of

all mobile phones that were present at a specific time within a precisely defined transmission cell from network operators.

This mass data collection allows the retrospective creation of large-scale movement profiles—a measure that can be deployed not only against specific suspects but against thousands of innocent people who were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, such as participants in demonstrations.

Section 24d creates the legal basis for the comprehensive use of automatic number-plate recognition systems. These systems continuously scan licence plates in flowing traffic and compare them in real time with wanted lists and databases. Once introduced, they turn roads and access routes into permanent surveillance zones, in which freedom of movement exists only under algorithmic control.

Section 24h permits the use of technical countermeasures against unmanned systems such as drones—up to and including taking control of their operation. This not only expands control over airspace, but simultaneously creates a technical apparatus capable of monitoring, disrupting or targeting any form of collective mobilisation and any assembly.

Video- and AI-based behavioural analysis, the expansion of biometric data collections and the merging of police and intelligence service databases create instruments with which strikes, demonstrations and critical networks can be criminalised and smashed. The reform therefore not only attacks individual rights, but equips the state in advance against any form of social opposition.

The state government justifies the measures by pointing to the need to combat “threats.” The police

state is being expanded in order to suppress the resistance that austerity and pro-war policies will inevitably provoke. This is not a phenomenon isolated to Berlin, but is an international one. The police state is being expanded worldwide and endowed with authoritarian powers.

Particularly revealing is the role played by the AfD in the passage of the ASOG amendment. Although the parties governing the state of Berlin—SPD and CDU—possess a comfortable majority, they relied on AfD votes for the expansion of the police state. The boundaries between the establishment parties and the far right are increasingly disappearing.

Built up by the ruling class to channel growing opposition into nationalist and racist channels, the AfD's programme has by now become official policy. The attacks on immigrants, the abolition of the right to asylum, the gigantic armaments budget, the reintroduction of conscription and the assaults on the welfare state are entirely in line with the policies of the AfD. At the same time, mass layoffs in industry are sharpening class conflicts ever further.

Like its sister parties in Italy, Austria, the Netherlands and the United States—where the AfD maintains close relations with Trump's Republicans—the AfD is needed to build an authoritarian police state and to proceed against the opposition of the working class and youth.



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