

The AfD enters the Bundestag: a far right party of the ruling establishment in Germany

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For the first time since the collapse of the Third Reich 72 years ago, a right-wing extremist party, the Alternative for Germany (AfD), has entered the German Bundestag with a double-digit election result. As was the case with Hitler's NSDAP (the Nazis), however, the rise to prominence of the AfD is no political accident.

Under conditions of the deepest crisis of capitalism since the 1930s, neo-fascist forces are being deliberately built up by the ruling class to enforce its policy of militarism, domestic rearmament, and destruction of social rights against growing popular opposition.

The seeds from which the AfD has grown are evident from any examination of the more than 90 AfD deputies who will take up seats in the Bundestag on October 24. Most of the deputies have been either recruited directly from the state apparatus—in particular the military, the judiciary and the police—or were previously members of one of Germany's "mainstream" parties.

Hardly anyone more embodies the close links between the AfD and the capitalist establishment than its leading election candidate, Alexander Gauland. The 76-year-old AfD vice chairman was a high-ranking functionary in the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in the state of Hesse for 40 years before he founded the AfD in 2013. In his long political career, Gauland worked for the Frankfurt Judiciary and the Federal Ministry of the Environment. From 1987 to 1991, he headed the Hesse State Chancellery under his mentor, Prime Minister Walter Wallmann (CDU).

During the Bundestag election campaign Gauland publicly praised Hitler's Wehrmacht and also called for the "casting out" of Aydan Özoguz, Germany's Integration Commissioner, to Turkey. In fact Gauland

has always represented far right and militaristic positions. As a CDU member he complained of Germany's "disturbed relationship with military force" and "lack of appreciation of the Bundeswehr." Germans would finally have to abandon their "all embracing pacifism," he said, because the decisive questions of the time would be decided by "iron and blood."

The second AfD chairperson, Alice Weidel, is a product of the sharp turn to the right of the entire ruling class in recent years. Wendell advocates strict neo-liberal policies and was groomed and promoted by influential political circles. As a so-called "gifted" student she received support to complete her doctorate from the Konrad-Adenauer Institution, which is affiliated to the CDU. Prior to joining the AfD in 2013, she worked in the asset management business of Goldman Sachs and Allianz Global Investors Europe in Germany's finance hub, Frankfurt am Main.

Many other AfD deputies also have close ties to politics and big business. About one-fifth are employed as entrepreneurs or consultants for larger companies and groups. Twenty-one deputies are former members of the CDU or its Bavarian sister organisation the Christian Social Union (CSU), eleven were formerly in the neo-liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) and five stem from the SPD. Norbert Kleinwächter (representing the AfD in Brandenburg) was previously active in the Electoral Alternative for Labor and Social Justice (WASG), which merged with the Stalinist Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) to form the Left Party in 2007.

The AfD faction in the Bundestag also includes a comparatively large proportion of policemen and soldiers. These include military advisors such as former Bundeswehr Colonel Rüdiger Lucassen, who also

worked for NATO, and the soldier René Springer, a personal assistant to Gauland. Another former officer is Peter Felser, who, together with the right-wing extremist publisher Götz Kubitschek, published a book with reports on the military deployment of the Bundeswehr in Bosnia. Gerald Otten (AfD Bavaria) is a former combat pilot and colonel in the army reserve. He is currently Eurofighter Sales Director at Airbus.

Representatives of the police include the Leipzig Police Commissioner Lars Herrmann, the deputy spokesperson for the AfD in the state of Baden-Württemberg, Martin Hess, and the police trainer Wilhelm von Gotberg. In 2001, former CDU member von Gotberg courted controversy by describing the Holocaust as an “effective instrument to criminalise Germans and their history,” and citing approvingly the Italian neo-fascist Mario Consoli.

Judges among the AfD deputies include such infamous figures as Jens Maier. At a meeting in the spring organised by the ultra-right magazine Compact, the second-ranking AfD figure in Saxony sought to exonerate the Norwegian far-right terrorist, Anders Breivik, claiming that Breivik’s mass murder spree resulted from “despair arising from alien cultures.” Two other far-right representatives of the legal community are the prosecutor Thomas Seitz and senior public prosecutor Roman Reusch (Berlin).

Nearly half of the AfD parliamentary faction belong to the national-conservative and far-right wing of the party, which increasingly and publicly embraces the traditions of Nazism. Ulrich Oehme, an insurance broker from Chemnitz, stuck up posters in the election campaign bearing the Nazi election text “Everything for Germany”—although the slogan has officially been banned. According to party members, the deputy chairman of the AfD in Saxony, Siegbert Droese drives a blue “AfD-combi” auto with the plates L-AH1818—the initials of Adolf Hitler.

Speeches by representatives of the ethnic-nationalist AfD faction named “The Wing,” which will enter the Bundestag with a large number of deputies, recall 1933. Jürgen Pohl, a close companion of the neo-Nazi Björn Höcke (AfD-Thuringia), declared in the election campaign, it was a “biblical challenge” to deport all “illegal aliens.” At a conference of the Thuringia AfD he threatened: “You are still sitting up there, you cowards ... But once again righteousness will reign and

the people will judge. Then God help you! “

The entry of this fascist scum in the Bundestag is a direct result of the revival in Germany of an aggressive foreign policy and great-power politics, actively pursued by all the capitalist parties. As was the case in the 1930s, the preparation of new wars by the ruling class goes hand-in-hand with the spread of extreme nationalist and racist filth and the building of a new far-right party.



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