

Far-right Alternative for Germany sets out blueprint for power in Saxony-Anhalt

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The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) already considers itself in power in Saxony-Anhalt. The state party congress, which met recently in the state capital Magdeburg, was entirely geared towards this goal. Before the delegates lay a 138-page “government programme” that provides a sense of what the far right intends to do in office. Party leader Alice Weidel has already described the lead candidate for the state election on September 6, Ulrich Siegmund, as “our state premier.”

The AfD has a real chance of taking power in Saxony-Anhalt, in eastern Germany. It is polling above 40 percent, well ahead of the present governing coalition of Christian Democrats (CDU), Social Democrats (SPD) and Liberal Democrats (FDP). With the exception of the Left Party split-off, the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW), all parties have so far ruled out governing in coalition with the far right. But a change to this position has long been under discussion. Should several parties fail to clear the 5 percent threshold required for entry into the state legislature, it is mathematically possible that the AfD could win an absolute majority even if it only polls just above 40 percent of the vote.

The AfD’s “government programme” opens with fierce attacks on the “legacy parties,” which it holds responsible for rising prices, taxes and levies, falling pensions, unsafe streets and public spaces, the attack on the Magdeburg Christmas market, crumbling schools and hospitals and numerous other real and alleged grievances. “If we [the AfD] no longer exist, democracy is dead. Then we will have the dictatorship of the legacy parties,” the preamble declares.

However, the AfD’s programme does not stand in opposition to the policies of the establishment parties—it drives those policies to their brutal extreme. “Deportation and remigration offensive,” encouraging families to have more children against “the extinction of the German people,” “a strong state that upholds law-and-order,” commemoration of the “military sacrifices” of the First and Second World Wars, a school system that does away with “namby-pamby teaching” and places its faith in “authority,” the alignment of culture and science with “German” values and traditions, rejection of “globalist climate ideology,” withdrawal from public broadcasting, “sound public finances” and strict adherence to the “debt brake”—these are the key watchwords.

The AfD underpins its “government programme” with a nationalist and fascist ideology that could have come straight from Nazi textbooks. Should the party come to power in Magdeburg, it will use the levers of state power to align the police, domestic intelligence service, judiciary, culture and education with this agenda.

In doing so, it will be creating the authoritarian state that the ruling class needs in order to push through its policy of war and social counter-revolution against growing resistance. Opposition to the war drive and social counter-revolution is enormous and can barely be kept under control by the trade union bureaucracy any longer. That is why the federal government is increasingly resorting to authoritarian measures and drawing the AfD ever further into the fold.

The AfD’s government programme is evidently modelled on Donald

Trump, whose close associates Vice President JD Vance and Elon Musk have publicly endorsed the AfD on several occasions. Trump too posed as an opponent of the political establishment during his election campaign, only to surround himself with the five richest men in the world at his inauguration, build an ICE apparatus of terror against the working class reminiscent of the Gestapo, and drive the military budget to historically unprecedented levels. His peace rhetoric has given way to a brutal war policy that openly threatens Iran with genocide.

The AfD’s programme also exposes the bankruptcy of the Left Party’s course and its counterproductive character. It claims it wants to “combat” the AfD through “the unity of all democrats” but in practice, this means collaborating with the very parties that are paving the way for the AfD. They are doing so through social cuts, massive rearmament spending, the expansion of state repression, the rigorous deportation of refugees and ongoing discussions about coalitions with the far right.

The Left Party itself bears primary responsibility for the rise of the AfD. In 1994, Saxony-Anhalt was the first federal state where it supported an SPD-Green minority government, which in the wake of reunification, offloaded the devastating social consequences of deindustrialisation onto the working class. This “Magdeburg model” lasted eight years. In neighbouring Thuringia too, where the Left Party provided the state premier in the person of Bodo Ramelow from 2014 for 10 years, the AfD is now also polling at 40 percent.

The cynical politics of the Left Party, which under cover of left-wing phrases put into practice the right-wing policies of the ruling class, has given a boost to the far-right demagogues of the AfD. They thrive on the claim that the “legacy parties” form a conspiracy and—regardless of election outcomes—all pursue the same goal.

The rise of the AfD can only be combated by an independent movement of the working class directed against social cuts, war and fascism and their root cause, capitalism. Such a movement would rapidly pull the ground from under the AfD’s feet and expose it for what it is: a brutal representative of the interests of capital.

Let us examine the AfD’s government programme more closely.

Raising the birth rate and a 180-degree immigration about-turn

In the language of Nazi racial policy, pride of place goes to concerns about the low birth rate among German families, which at 1.31 children per woman in Saxony-Anhalt is even below the national average of 1.5. The AfD proposes to address this with a “baby bonus” of €2,000 for the first two children and €4,000 for each subsequent child—but only if one parent holds German citizenship and both have had a fixed place of residence in Saxony-Anhalt for at least one year.

The foundation of the AfD’s family policy is its rejection of what it

calls the “perversely left-wing, radically feminist and individualist spirit” that, it claims, is corroding “traditional family and gender roles.” While the AfD stops short of calling for an outright ban on abortion, which has been legal in eastern Germany since 1972, it opposes “any regulation of abortion outside the criminal code with all the associated political implications.”

While promoting German births, the programme calls for “a 180-degree reversal of immigration policy.” The capacity of the state and municipalities to absorb immigrants is, it claims, “exhausted in terms of security policy, identity policy and financial policy.” “Illegal, culturally alien and anti-indigenous mass immigration” must be ended and a “deportation and remigration offensive” launched without delay.

This is plainly designed to stoke racial antagonisms. The most vulnerable members of society are made scapegoats for the social crisis. At 10 percent, the proportion of residents with an immigrant background in Saxony-Anhalt, is among the lowest in all Germany. The largest group, at nearly 40,000 people, are refugees from Ukraine, followed by Syrians and Poles.

Education, culture and science—back to the 19th century

The AfD places particular emphasis on education, culture and science. It sees these areas as levers for anchoring its far-right ideology in public life. Because they fall largely under state-level authority, a state government can impose its agenda in them far more quickly and directly than in areas controlled by the federal government.

“There is so much one can do in the field of education and cultural policy—more than in almost any other area of state politics,” says Hans-Thomas Tillschneider, AfD Saxony-Anhalt’s spokesman on education policy and one of the main authors of the election programme.

The Romanian-born ethnic German and holder of a doctorate in Islamic studies is one of the leading figures on the extreme right of the AfD. He was a member of the now-dissolved far-right “Flügel” (“Wing”) faction of the party and spokesman of the likewise dissolved “Patriotic Platform.” He maintains close contact with other far-right outfits—the “Identitarian Movement,” the campaign network “One Percent for Our Country,” Götz Kubitschek’s “Institute for State Policy” and the monthly magazine *Compact*.

The AfD seeks to overcome what it calls German “national masochism,” the “perpetuation of a guilt complex” and a “lack of self-confidence” through “a new patriotic cultural policy,” a “patriotic turn in every sphere” and the restoration of “national pride.” It blames this condition on the “1968 movement in West Germany,” which, it claims, initiated “a tradition of destroying tradition” “hollowed out our cultural heritage” and “blocked the possibilities of forming a stable national identity.”

The AfD envisages an education system that reverses all the pedagogical advances of the last 150 years. Schools are to become institutions of Prussian discipline once more, producing loyal subjects for the state and disciplined soldiers for the army.

“Homework, front-of-class teaching, regular classroom exercises, rote learning, performance testing and extensive reading” are to restore the school system to health, it claims. “The teacher is not merely a ‘learning facilitator,’ but an authority figure and mediator.” Digital media have no place in the classroom; they are “the cause of educational decline.”

At the same time, the AfD wants to weaken compulsory schooling. Parents are to have the final say in all matters of children’s education and upbringing and “a free choice between school and home education.” The AfD is here aligning itself with an internationally coordinated offensive

against the public education system, behind which stand far-right networks worth billions—such as the Heritage Foundation and Christian fundamentalist organisations.

The AfD also wants to end the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools and nurseries. The shared education of children with and without disabilities is to be discontinued. According to the AfD, the “experiment of inclusion” has failed. Children with disabilities “paralyse” the progress of lessons in mainstream schools.

If the programme has so far failed to succeed, it is above all due to the shortage of teachers and social workers and to underfunding—for which the ruthless austerity policies of federal and state governments bear responsibility. But for the AfD it is a matter of excluding the disabled.

The AfD intends to thoroughly “revise” school curricula. The antimilitarist attitude deeply embedded in the population since the two world wars is to be eroded so that Germany can once again become “fit for war.” Memories of National Socialism (Nazism) are to be driven out of history lessons and replaced by ethnic nationalism. Fascist historical myths are to be dusted off and made the basis of history teaching.

Teaching is to be oriented around the motto: “More Bismarck, less Hitler.” What this means is “Back to the *Kaiserreich*” (German Empire) with its policy of suppressing the labour movement, waging imperialist war and pursuing colonialism. Teaching is to place “a clear emphasis on the emergence and success story” of the nation state founded in 1871 by blood and iron, which “set standards in science, culture and business that can still serve as inspiration and model for us today.”

Cultural life is also to be censored and reshaped accordingly. “Promote patriotism—no state funding for anti-German art and culture,” reads one subheading, reminiscent of the Nazi slogan of “degenerate art.” Above all, the Bauhaus in Dessau—the most important cultural monument of international significance in Saxony-Anhalt—is in the firing line. The AfD had already campaigned vigorously against it in 2024, describing it as an “aberration of modernism.” Here too it follows the tradition of the Nazis, who first drove the pioneering architecture and design school out of Weimar and then banned it altogether.

The universities are also to be thoroughly restructured. In higher education policy, the AfD wants to return to the authoritarian, hierarchical university model of the 1950s. Student representation rights, which are already under considerable pressure, are to be curtailed still further, in order to reassert the absolute dominance of the professoriate as the core of research and teaching.

In the natural sciences—whose breathtaking advances in the 21st century are inseparably bound up with the international networking and collaboration of tens of thousands of researchers—the AfD wants to nationalise, or rather provincialise.

“German science has lost its authenticity and with it the secret of its intellectual success,” the AfD laments. “Instead of German distinctiveness, it offers a pale imitation of the Anglo-Saxon system, which is found the world over but is authentic only in Britain and the United States.” The AfD will “put an end to this state of affairs in Saxony-Anhalt and liberate German science back to itself through fundamental reforms.” What profoundly reactionary nonsense.

In education and culture, too, the AfD is merely taking to an extreme the course that the establishment parties have long since begun.

As far back as 2014, the leadership of Berlin’s Humboldt University and almost all the media sided with the far-right historian Jörg Baberowski when he rehabilitated Nazi apologist Ernst Nolte, and asserted that Hitler was “not cruel.” Since then, the playing-down of Nazi crimes and the rewriting of the history of the Second World War have taken on ever greater dimensions. Students, teachers and artists who criticise the genocide against the Palestinians are subjected to pressure, expelled or banned from performing.

Construction of a police state

A central place in the AfD's government programme is occupied by the strengthening of the police and intelligence service. The chapter on "Internal Security" states: "Guaranteeing internal security is the primary purpose of the state, taking precedence over all social tasks and desiderata. The state exists to maintain order. ... The AfD therefore attaches the highest importance to internal security. We are committed to a strong state that upholds law-and-order and provides every citizen with security."

Security thus takes priority over democracy: "Security is the basic prerequisite for everything: civil liberty, economic opportunity, democratic participation. Without security, nothing else counts." This is the ideology of a police state that only tolerates "democracy" for as long as it does not stand in the way of the capitalist interests it represents.

Among other things, the AfD promises: "More police officers," "No general suspicion in cases of firearms use," "To introduce tasers," "Deport criminal foreigners," "Increase deportation [detention] places tenfold," "'Antifa' to be kept in check" and "Introduce a voluntary citizens' watch." For young people, a "warning-shot detention" of up to four weeks is to be introduced, "which is a correctional measure aimed at instilling discipline."

The judiciary is also to be restructured to take a harder line against crime and "violence-prone left-wing extremism": "Punishment must follow hard on the heels of the offence."

The *Verfassungsschutz* (domestic intelligence service) is criticised for classifying and monitoring the AfD state association as "demonstrably far-right extremist." It is not, however, to be abolished, but "reformed into a domestic intelligence service devoted to the classic intelligence remit: investigating activities threatening the state, counterterrorism and counterespionage—in secret!"

In other words: the *Verfassungsschutz* is to be strengthened and deployed in the AfD's service to combat social opposition and left-wing opponents.

Energy and economic policy

The AfD calls for a "180-degree reversal of energy policy," a return to fossil fuels and a halt to the expansion of wind power and the coal phase-out. Not even the increasingly catastrophic heat waves are enough to deter the far right from sacrificing humanity's future to the profit interests of the energy corporations.

"The AfD fundamentally rejects the globalist climate ideology and the attendant policy of prosperity destruction," the programme states. "An AfD-led state government will not attempt to save the world's climate in Saxony-Anhalt."

On fiscal policy, the AfD champions a "lean state" and the debt brake. It will therefore continue and intensify the existing austerity course.

It proposes to solve the rise in care costs by shifting the burden of caring for elderly people back onto families: "Care is by its nature an expression of the concern of loving relatives. We will support the family so that it can better fulfil its proper function of relieving the burden on the community."

Conclusion

In June 1933, Leon Trotsky wrote in his outstanding "Portrait of

National Socialism" that fascism had come to power "on the back of the petty bourgeoisie," to whom it had promised all manner of things. "But fascism, once in power, is anything but a government of the petty bourgeoisie," he wrote. It raises itself "above the nation as the purest embodiment of imperialism."

This could be applied to the AfD today as well. It exploits the frustration and anger of the petty bourgeoisie—and of many workers too—at the policies of the establishment parties, whilst itself representing those policies in their purest form. What drives it—and all bourgeois parties—is not subjective motives but the deep crisis of world capitalism, to which the ruling class has only one answer: conducting war abroad for the violent redivision of the world and dictatorship at home to suppress the working class.

A takeover of government by the AfD in Magdeburg would without doubt be a grave danger. But this danger can be halted neither through collaboration with the other parties of government, nor through protest alone, and certainly not through a ban on the AfD. The latter would only strengthen the state apparatus of repression, which is itself riddled with far-right elements. At the party congress, AfD state chairman Martin Reichardt boasted: "We are reaching [polling] shares of over 30 percent in schools, in government offices, in the police." And it would create a precedent for the banning of left-wing organisations.

The danger of fascism and war can only be halted by the independent intervention of the most powerful social force on this planet, the international working class, which is coming into increasing conflict with capitalism. To be victorious, it needs a socialist perspective and leadership. Building that is the goal of the Sozialistische Gleichheitspartei (Socialist Equality Party) and the International Committee of the Fourth International.



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