



Written by [James Murphy](#) on August 15, 2023

Germany Considers Banning a Political Party for the Sake of “Democracy”

Unhappy with its growing popularity among German citizens, some German politicians and media outlets are calling on the right-leaning Alternative for Germany (AfD, *Alternative für Deutschland*) Party to be banned. AfD is currently leading in polls, with the nation’s next general election scheduled for June of next year.

Founded in 2013 as a Eurosceptic conservative alternative party, the AfD has reportedly drifted more to the right. Party co-leader Alice Weidel has called the European Union (EU) “deeply undemocratic” and has raised the idea of a Brexit-style exit from the bloc of nations. Some in the party have railed against EU immigration quotas and have demonstrated against woke ideology and what they call “ideology of inclusion.”



AP Images

AfD leaders at a party meeting in Germany

Not surprisingly, Germany’s left wing wants AfD banned — because engaging in “democracy” is so much easier without choices.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, a Social Democrat, hinted at the ban, saying recently, “We all have it in our hands to put those who despise our democracy in their place.” Since Germany’s president is expected to act above political infighting, just exactly who “despises” democracy was only inferred, but others have made it more clear.

A recent poll shows Germans evenly split on whether AfD, a party that now represents nearly a quarter of the nation’s electorate, should be banned, with 47 percent for a ban and 47 percent against.

German news magazine *Der Spiegel* made its feelings well known with an op-ed entitled, “Ban Enemies of the Constitution!”

“The AfD has become more and more radicalized,” *Der Spiegel* argued. “It’s time to defend democracy with better weapons.”

A co-leader of the ruling Social Democrats said that a ban should be considered if Germany’s Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution classifies the party as “proven Right-wing extremists.” That office has [already](#) categorized the AfD’s youth wing — the Young Alternative for Germany or “JA” — as “extremist,” claiming they were “clearly xenophobic” and that they were “propagating a racial concept of society based on basic biological assumptions.”

Thomas Haldenwang, the president of the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, has also noted an increase in extremism in the AfD. “We see a considerable number of protagonists in



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this party that spread hate against all types of minorities here in Germany,” Haldenwang said.

Simply banning the party isn’t good enough for some opponents. Axel Steier, the founder of a NGO known as Mission Lifeline, says that the party’s leaders should be jailed as well.

“In the country of the perpetrators, it should not be taboo to ban the AfD and imprison the leadership, even if this deprives 20-40 percent of German voters of their opinion,” Steier said on X.

“The persecution of Nazis is still a service to all of humanity,” Steier added.

The German Institute for Human Rights, which is not a government agency, claims that the AfD has “has reached a degree of dangerousness that they can be banned according to the constitution.”

According to them, AfD is looking “to implement its racist and right-wing extremist goals” and is “shifting the limits of what can be said so that people can get used to their ethno-nationalist positions.”

Among the tenets of AfD, as listed in its [manifesto](#), is the belief that government has gotten too big.

“Germany’s government institutions have developed a disquieting independent existence,” the manifesto states. “The distribution of powers no longer corresponds to the fundamental laws of separation of powers. Further, the public sector has expanded beyond appropriate boundaries. Therefore, it is an important part of our platform to revert government institutions to their original goals and responsibilities.”

The party is also looking for the EU to have less power over the nations in the bloc.

“European politics are characterized by a creeping loss of democracy. The EU has become an undemocratic entity, whose policies are determined by bureaucrats who have no democratic accountability. A fundamental reform of the EU is necessary, if it is to remain a beacon of freedom and democracy in the world,” the manifesto states.

So, far from destroying democracy in Germany, the AfD seems to wish to restore German democracy without the meddling of bureaucrats in Brussels.

Given its history, Germany is rightfully sensitive about being seen as “xenophobic” or of appearing to be “propagating a racial concept of society based on basic biological assumptions.”

Unfortunately, the banning of political party doesn’t seem “democratic.” In fact, it seems like something an actual Nazi might do.



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