



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on August 12, 2011

Germany Considers Banning National Democratic Party

The German government is considering banning the National Democratic Party (known as NPD, for “National Party of Deutschland,” a political movement defined by the punditry as “far right.” Gerhard Schröder, the Social Democrat who preceded Angela Merkel as Chancellor of Germany, failed in his attempt to ban the small party in 2003.



Hajo Funke of the Free University of Berlin supports the ban: “The NPD is dangerous — its far-right, violent, and xenophobic ideology threatens the multi-ethnic fabric of German life,” he declares, adding that Germany is still home to “an active, dangerous and strong Neo-Nazi movement.” The NPD’s foes claim that it does not deserve taxpayers’ money. In Germany, all political parties receive tax dollars; in contrast, many Americans believe that taxpayer support for any political party compromises the integrity of the whole political system.

Observers note that the label “far-right” is largely meaningless: The Nazi Party, which many German politicians are comparing with the NPD, specifically ran as a party of the middle. The actual founding of the National Socialist movement was in Austria by Walter Riehl, Rudolf Jung, and Hans Knirsch, as Marcel William Fodor relates in his book *South of Hitler*. In November, 1910, these men launched what they called the Deutschsoziale Arbeiterpartei, which soon achieved political success. The party established its program at Inglau in 1914. Its platform was for the working class, against social and political reaction, and opposed to the church, the aristocracy, and the capitalist classes. This party eventually adopted the name Deutsche Nationalsozialistische Arbeiter Partei, which, except for the order of the words, is the same name as “Nazi.” In May 1918 it selected the Harkendruetz, or swastika, as its symbol. Both Hitler and Anton Drexler, the nominal founder of the Nazi Party, corresponded with this earlier, anti-capitalistic, anti-church party in Austria. Before WWI, Hitler was highly sympathetic to socialism. Emil Lorimer, in his 1939 book, *What Hitler Wants*, wrote that during the Vienna years, Hitler had already felt great sympathy for the trade unions and antipathy toward employers, and had attended sessions of the Austrian Parliament. Though many have portrayed Hitler as a political neophyte in 1914, he was not.

The National Socialists presented themselves as an alternative to capitalism and communism. Most of their economic policies were markedly socialistic and collectivist, as observers at the time noted. Taxes, especially on business and on the rich, increased dramatically under the Nazis. Social welfare programs like the ubiquitous “Winterhilfe” were operated by Nazis all over Germany. The term “Third



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Reich” was not, as most people believe, coined by [Arthur Moeller van der Bruck](#) in his 1922 of the same name. Thomas Mann invented the term to describe favorably German war aims in World War I. Moeller popularized the phrase, but “Third Reich” was not, as Moeller intended it, anti-Semitic. Moeller was neither a Nazi nor an anti-Semite and it was intended to mean “Third Way” or “Third Viewpoint.” Moeller liked Fascist Italy and Soviet Russia and he wanted a “socialist foreign policy.” John Gunther, in his definitive, *Inside Europe Today*, wrote: “Nazism began as a predominately left-socialist movement, the party program, written by Feder and pronounced unalterable by Hitler, was a formidably anti-capitalist document.” Tablouis notes the slavish imitation of Bolshevism by the Nazis: “The Hitler Youth is modeled on the Communist Youth of Stalin, who first taught children to arm. The Berlin Gestapo is a replica of the Moscow OGPU.”

Nazis were first elected deputies to the Reichstag in 1924. These Nazi deputies did not sit on the Right side of the Reichstag or the Left side of the Reichstag, but rather at the back of the chamber, deliberately stating in the political language of the time that the Nazi Party was neither Right nor Left. During the two years from 1928 to 1930, Nazi deputies sat with a cluster of other non-aligned parties, again signaling their independence of either part of the fanciful spectrum. Only in 1930 did Nazis choose to sit on the Right side of the Reichstag. Even this was quickly repudiated within the Nazi Party, which consistently voted — often only with the Communist Party — “no confidence” parliamentary votes.

As late as November 4, 1931, Nazi propaganda was again proclaiming: “Left and Right, outdated concepts! A new man forms a new ear” to a poster with a huge Nazi “We” standing behind the political parties of the notional Left and Right. In July 1932, Hitler campaigned against both the Left and the Right. Nazi economist Gottfried Feder’s 1934 book, *Hitler’s Official Programme*, states: “We know that neither the Left, with their false promise of ‘Down with Capitalism,’ nor the Right, with their phrases about the Fatherland, are capable of initiating a new world epoch, for neither Marxists nor reactionaries could alter anything in the nature of our economy.” The 1938 Hitler Youth book, *The Life of the Führer*, notes in its introductory chapters that Hitler had opposed both conservatives and Marxists.

In his 1939 indictment of Nazism, *Germany Rampant*, Ernest Hambloch has an entire chapter on political parties under the German Empire before WWI and political parties under the Weimar Republic. He lists parts of the “left,” “right” and “centre” in the German Empire pre-1914; however, there are no “left,” “right” or “centre” parties in the Weimar Republic, but rather “Weimar Parties” i.e. (those which supported the republican constitution), “National Reactionary Parties,” and “Revolutionary Parties.” The Nazis are listed, along with the Communist Party of Germany, as the two “Revolutionary Parties.” Pointedly, the Nazis were not considered a “National Reactionary Party.” Otto Strasser, the brother and fellow Nazi of Gregor Strasser, who was the second leading Nazi for much of the Nazi Party’s existence, in his 1940 book, *Hitler and I*, revealed his ideology before he found a home in the Nazi Party. Otto Strasser wrote: “I was a young student of law and economics, a Left Wing student leader.” Hitler referred to Strasser, a Nazi and the brother of the second-ranking Nazi at the time, as “a parlor Bolshevik.” Otto’s brother Gregor, had, in fact, been a Communist before becoming a Nazi.

Observers of today’s Germany note that serious talk of banning the NPD because some in the country deem it to be “extreme” is an indicator of just how meaningless definitions such as “extremism” are. The American patriots and Founders were “extreme” in their stand for liberty. If these men were living in today’s Germany, would the German government have banned their speeches and actions?



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Constitutionalists know that true liberty is the right to propose what others — even a majority — may not like. When government is permitted to determine what is “good” and “bad” political debate, then the purpose of political debate itself is lost.



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