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Nazi March into Germany's Parliament

By Thomas Klikauer
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On 24th September 2017, elections to Germany's parliament resulted in the fact that for the first time since 1949, a neo-Nazi party was elected with 12.6%, just behind Merkel's conservatives (32.9%) and the social-democratic SPD (20.5%). Other parties entering the German parliament are the neo-liberal FDP (10.7%), the Left (9.2%), and the Greens (8.9%).

Unlike the old Nazis who called themselves Nazis, the new Nazis call themselves "Alternative for Germany" (AfD) camouflaging their true ideology. The AfD is also known as "alternative for the dumb" in the best tradition of the AfD's ideological predecessors. Neither Himmler, Goering or Hitler suffered from intellectualism – they were "men"(!) of brutality and action. Much of Hitler's almost unreadable "Mein Kampf", for example, was a fight against German grammar as it was a fight against Jews, workers, and the left. The Nazi's tradition of stupidity, racism and anti-intellectualism lives on just as the old Nazis used to prevail in Germany's post-World War II institutions. Apart from a few show trials, most Nazis seamlessly converted into post-war Germany's political, economic, and legal institutions. These Nazis became government advisors (Globke), others became judges and state premiers (Filbinger), while others made it into Germany's chancellery (Carstens), etc. They are the ideological forbearers of the AfD.

According to the recent (24th September) election results, the Nazi AfD became the third biggest party after the conservative centre-right CDU and the centre-left SPD. Merkel's CDU and the social-democratic SPD have been in a coalition in recent years governing Germany. Like

Germany's old Nazis and the Italian Fasci di Combattimento, capital gave a helping hand in founding the new Nazi's AfD. Originally, the AfD was a free-market, pro-capitalism, anti-European party establishing itself to the right of Merkel's conservatives. Today, it favours racism, Nazi glorification, anti-Semitism, is anti-Islamic and staunchly against anything remotely progressive (e.g. the left, trade unions, etc.).

For the most part, the AfD simply exchanged scapegoating Jews (old Nazis) with scapegoating Muslims (new Nazis) warning that Germany – and indeed Europe – will be overrun by Muslims. The AfD occupies the extreme right that is increasingly disillusioned with Germany's traditional right as Merkel moves towards moderate conservatism. Since years East-Germany's enlightened protestant Angelika Merkel has moved the CDU towards the political centre favouring strong state programmes, social welfare and giving a helping hand to migrants.

Quite similar to the old Nazis that were generously supported by German capital (Mercedes-Benz, Krupp, Deutsche Bank, Hugo Boss, etc.) and the press (Hugenberg), today's media are, at least partly, responsible for the electoral growth. It allowed the AfD's new(ish) Nazi ideology to enter into the mainstream. Virtually all German media channels pushed the AfD's right-wing extremist ideology by inviting them into their TV studios. That never happened before in post-war Germany.

At the one and only TV debate between chancellor Merkel and her challenger Martin Schulz (social-democrats), for example, Germany's leading TV channels (ARD, ZDF, RTL, Sat1) offered the AfD a platform allowing it to role out its xenophobic right-wing extremism. TV moderators were asking many questions about non-Germans. Journalists connected terror and immigration pushing the AfD's ideological agenda. The threat of Nazism to Germany was not worthy of a single question. This is Germany in 2017. German journalist Stefan Niggemeier, for example, tweeted that over half of the 100-minute TV debate sounded like a pro-AfD show. The AfD support received by four of Germany's leading journalists was shocking to many.

Earlier this month, AfD's right-wing extremist Alice Weidel (e.g. "the Wehrmacht did good") was treated like a mainstream figure. Many are deeply shocked about German media and accuses made for the AfD's right-wing extremist agenda. This should have no place in public TV.

Despite all this the question still is: what is the Alternative for Germany (AfD)? The party was founded in 2013 by a nationalistic capitalist named Bernd Lucke. Very soon thereafter, much more right-wing extremists took over the party, perhaps in a stark reminder of Hitler's "night of the long knives". The AfD's turn towards Nazism included the election of Ms Frauke Petry as head of the party in 2015. Since 2014, the AfD has been elected to several German state parliaments. Its main political ideologies are anti-EU, it defames abortion, promotes ultra-nationalism, racism, a mythical and xenophobic hatred of others, and embraces Germany's Nazi past.

Fascism often comes with a mass movement. Italy's fascists had the black-shirts, Hungary the Arrow-Cross and Germany's old Nazi party had storm-troopers (SA and later SS). In modern fascism, the AfD's outfit is called PEGIDA. The AfD also supports thousands of very dangerous neo-Nazi punchers. Between 1990 and 2013 alone, 184 people have been killed by neo-Nazis in

Germany for political reasons – not to mention the Nazi-killers of the NSU. Nazi victims are mostly German-Turkish people, leftists, punk-rockers, Muslims, homeless people, and refugees, among many others.

The AfD's head, Frauke Petry, wants to reintroduce a core Nazi ideology called "völkisch", a Nazi-term meaning the Aryan German master race – white power. The two leading campaigners for the AfD campaign, Alice Weidel and Alexander Gauland are right-wing extremists. In a recent e-mail Weidel wrote, members of Angela Merkel's cabinet are "pigs" and "puppets of the winners of World War II". She believes that Germany is not "sovereign". This is a common Nazi claim. Hence the AfD's call to re-introduce Reichsbürger (race based citizenship).

The boss of the AfD in the parliament of the state of Saxony-Anhalt, for example, André Poggenburg, openly uses Nazi language against the left in a speech in parliament. Markus Frohnmaier, who is a candidate for the Bundestag in the state of Baden-Württemberg – he is the head of the AfD's young alternative and a spokesperson for Alice Weidel – has close connections to neo-Nazis such as the "German Defence League" (GDL). He said that he and the AfD would together "clear the country out" of the left. This is the Nazi language of concentration camps.

Dubravko Mandic, an immigrant from Yugoslavia now agitates against immigration seeing the AfD as a right-wing radical network. The AfD agitates against a supposed replacement of Europeans by people from the Middle East, mainly Muslims. Here Jew hatred and Muslim hatred overlap. Neo-Nazis and America's extreme right in Charlottesville were chanting, "Jews will not replace us". Like the AfD, they also believe Jews and Muslims are behind all evil. This is the very same anti-Semitic ideology AfD author Wolfgang Gedeon promotes. For him, all evil comes from the Jews, America, Zionism, Muslims, homosexuals, and the left.

Meanwhile the AfD's Jens Maier trivialised Norwegian neo-Nazi mass murderer Anders Breivik who admitted that a book by the neo-Nazi Fjordman inspired him. Another leading figure of the AfD is Stephan Brandner – an extremely aggressive demagogue who wants Angela Merkel to be locked up. A stark reminder of Trump's "lock her up". Brandner accuses Germany's antifascists, the Antifa, as being SA-style Nazis.

AfD's man in Bremen, Frank Magnitz shares many racist fantasies such as the coming destruction of all of Islam by sharing a picture with the inscription, "if you could push this button and remove Islam from the world forever, would you do it? Like and share for yes!" You see a group of praying Muslims and on the left side a red button. Pushing the button means supporting the destruction of Islam and all Muslims. These are old and new Nazi fantasies of killing an entire religion – ethnic cleansing and race hatred. Much of this is part of the AfD's political project. Very soon, many of them will become members of Germany's parliament.

Blogger David Berger will vote AfD as he publicly declared. At an AfD rally in Jena with key AfD politicians such as Alice Weidel, Stephan Brandner, Wiebke Muhsal, some 250 hard-core AfD supporters and 1000 counter-protesters, as well as some neo-Nazi AfD activists shouted, "we will build a subway system to Auschwitz". This did not occur in 1933. This is Germany in 2017.

Gauland, the party's no. 2 – many say de facto no. 1 – said recently at a neo-Nazi meeting at mount “Kyffhäuser” (a legendary Nazi pilgrimage site) that he is “proud of German soldiers in World War I and World War II”.

With the AfD, the affirmation of the Holocaust has become mainstream in Germany today. It is the ideology that got the new Nazis of the AfD into Germany's parliament by delivering almost six million votes. Historically, Nazi Germany's Wehrmacht was an essential part of the Holocaust alongside the SS, Police Battalions and others.

One of the AfD's leading Nazi politicians is Björn Höcke. He speaks in a manner imitating Joseph Goebbels. He calls Germany's Holocaust Memorial “a memorial of shame”. Other AfD figures such as Holocaust denier Wilhelm von Gottberg (aged 77) are on the election list of the AfD in the state of Lower Saxony. It might be interesting to pursue a “who voted for Hitler?” comparison to ‘who voted for the AfD?’

All of this testifies that indeed, there is a nasty climate in Germany these days. Right-wing extremists and Nazis are able to shout the most anti-Semitic, racist and pro-Germanic race slogans such as the old Nazi's “Germany Awake” or “Whatever it takes for Germany”. Both Nazi slogans are actually forbidden in Germany yet go unpunished. Nazi propaganda, ideology, brutality and murder more often than not were unpunished in the dying years of Weimar.

Today, mainstream Nazi ideology involves some very rich and influential people in Europe. According to a report by investigative journalist Tomasz Konicz, the AfD gets money and support from the Mövenpick Company (ice-cream) and from the “Swiss Goal Corporation” that itself includes leading AfD politicians. Billionaire August von Finck junior (born 1930), among the richest people in Germany (he lives in Switzerland), is a supporter of the AfD. Finck's company bought the name of the gold company “Degussa”. This is the very same Degussa that delivered Zyklon B to the gas chambers in Auschwitz. Degussa would also melt down the gold from the teeth of the murdered Jewish victims.

August von Finck's father was a Nazi who “Aryanised” Jewish banks including the Rothschild Bank and Dreyfus & Co. in Germany. “The Junior”, as he is known, supports several right-wing parties – the most recent being the AfD. AfD politician Beatrix von Storch was, for example, a member of a reactionary “Citizens' Convent” dedicated to a hard-core neoliberal campaign against Germany's welfare state. They were generously supported by Finck's company. Many have highlighted the connection of billionaire von Finck and the AfD. August von Finck is also owner of Mövenpick hotels & resorts. He represents the capitalist establishment in Germany. Not surprisingly, he was a big beneficiary of a tax reform in 2009, carried out by Merkel. Ideologically, the Finck family has a long history of pure Nazism – today culminating in its support for the AfD.

Journalist Marcus Engert of BuzzFeed News has analysed 396 AfD candidates exposing their extremist right-wing agendas. Meanwhile, professor Hajo Funke fears that Germany's parliament isn't fit to deal with the looming Nazi onslaught. Until a few days ago, post-war Germany never had such a well-organised and strong Nazi party in its federal parliament. Unfortunately, over the years, Germany had dozens, if not hundreds of former individual Nazi party members in its

parliament since from 1949 through the 1950s. This ugly German post-war history is well known. As soon as anti-Nazi re-education ended and America discovered that it needs Germany in its newly found Cold War fight against the Soviet Union, ex-Nazis were welcomed into the political-administrative elites of post-war Germany. Others simply continued. Germany never really had a de-Nazification. Nazism has lived on, often silently but it was there. Today, the AfD brings out the racist undercurrent that was kept alive for many years in Germany.

Carrying Nazi ideology into post-war Germany has many features. One includes leading Nazis such as the aforementioned Hans Globke responsible for Nazi race laws. He became minister under Konrad Adenauer in the 1950s. The list of post-war Nazis also includes Kurt-Georg Kiesinger – a Nazi party member – and later Germany's chancellor (1966–1969). He was courageously and famously slapped by one of Europe's greatest anti-fascists, Beate Klarsfeld, in 1968. One might also include Nazi-professor Heidegger and Hans Filbinger (CDU). Filbinger was state premier (Baden-Württemberg, 1966–1978). He was a member of the Nazi party. The sheer endless list of Nazis in post-war Germany also includes Carl Carstens – a Nazi party member who became Germany's president (1979–1984).

Since 24th September 2017, Germany has Nazis in its parliament. Contrary to the 1960s, these days Germany has not yet seen another Beate Klarsfeld who will tell the AfD's anti-Semites, racists, and Holocaust deniers that their politics will not go unchallenged. Today, Nazism is much more widespread compared to the 1960s. Today, we have many young and still a few old Nazis joining forces in an unprecedented way. In the 1960s, old Nazis never had a chance to form their own party and to be elected. In the year 2017, AfD Nazis have already fulfilled some of their ideological missions: honouring the Nazi Wehrmacht, denying the Holocaust, and fighting against democracy and the left.

Being furnished with parliamentary status will only encourage Germany's new Nazis. Like in 1933, they will not moderate themselves. If history is anything to go by, the gravest danger for Germany, the left and ultimately Europe and the world comes not only from the new Nazis. It comes also from a conservative coalition government that includes the new Nazis (AfD). By 1933 Hitler's Nazi party was already in decline in electoral polling. His Nazis actually came to power through a conservative coalition government making Hitler Reichskanzler (chancellor). It was German conservatism that made Hitler possible. In 2017, one might hope that German conservatism has learned its historic lesson.