



Where is the decay of German politics leading?

The political and party system in the states of the so-called collective West is in the greatest crisis since the end of World War II.

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Introduction

In 2008, the Western financial world skidded very close to a catastrophe. A bank in the USA, Lehmann Brothers, went bankrupt and, as a result, the entire Western financial system began to slide.

German Chancellor Merkel appeared before the cameras with Finance Minister Peer Steinbrück and issued guarantees. Germany held its breath. It was serious and had repercussions for the entire EU.

A lot of taxpayers' money was subsequently used to plug holes across the EU for years.

Slovakia, for example, proudly indebted at only 20 percent, was forced by the German government to double its debt in order to use this money to bail out the Greek state. The day after the corresponding decision, the conservative government - considered the most successful since the country's founding - consequently resigned.

Slovakia has not recovered politically from this blow to this day.

Other states were also pressured to provide similar aid for this and other reasons. The Maastricht Treaty, EU regulations and direct political pressure made it possible.

The money from Slovakia and other treasuries never reached Greece, but went virtually straight to Deutsche Bank and some French banks. This is because the rescue of the Greek budget was only the political crutch to save the banks, which had forced loans on the Greek state without ever having the corresponding creditworthiness. Under normal circumstances, Deutsche Bank and Co would have been beyond rescue after the loans defaulted.

The financial and economic world found it difficult to get into calmer waters. Because the causes of the 2008 financial crisis were not solved, they were filled up with money, money and more money. A solution to the problem would have shaken the entire European Union construct to its foundations.

In Germany, a party critical of the EU was founded - the Alternative for Germany. It was less opposed to the EU as a whole than to the single currency, the euro, and its consequences. From the outset, it was a party to the right of the CDU/CSU. This did not require any conservative balancing acts, because under Angela Merkel the two nominally conservative parties had already been pushing toward the political center for years. The CDU and CSU did not quite manage the balancing act from the right to the center, so there was room.

Germany has been transforming for years

The political situation before the 2013 federal elections, which took place on September 22, was thus tense. It was no longer that of 2008, but still by no means good, so that the AfD had so much popularity that it only narrowly missed entering the Bundestag.

Can you still remember the 2013 Bundestag election? Here is an excerpt from Merkel's appearance after the victory:



What was incomprehensible to many at the time should now raise far fewer questions: Merkel throws the German flag into the trash bin at the celebration marking the CDU's victory in the election to the German Bundestag, on camera, with a face that says more than a thousand words.

That there would be arrests years later just for carrying the Basic Law was beyond imagination in 2013.

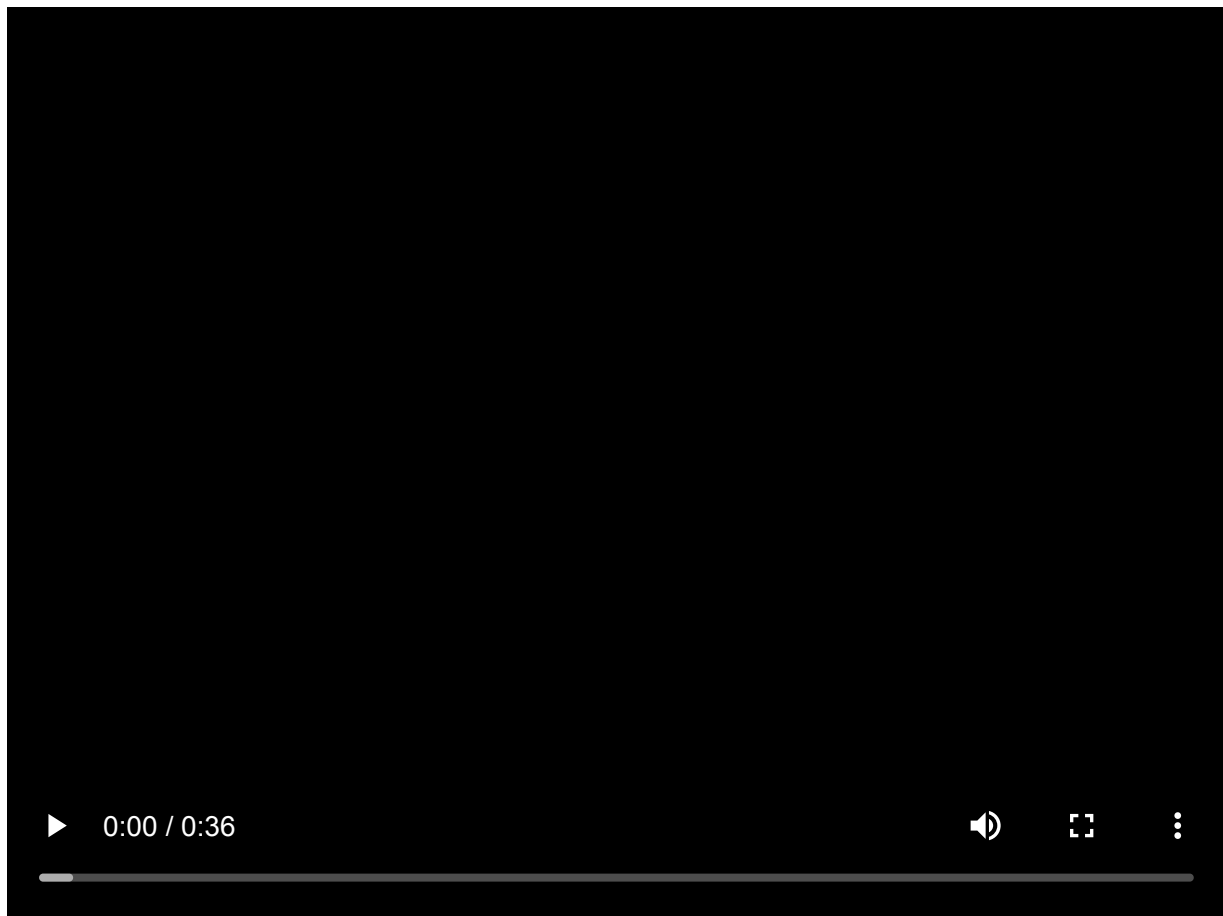
The country has not been able to rest politically since then. It changed in a way that hardly anyone had expected or thought possible.

Whereas in the past Germany often positioned itself in such a way that it appeared to be reacting to events in world politics, the new Merkel government took a much more aggressive stance toward other states in order to assert German, EU and NATO interests. In recent years, the EU increasingly subordinated itself to NATO interests and became its economic arm. An independent policy geared to the interests of Europe or even Germany hardly ever took place.

Examples include the events in Syria, the coup in Ukraine in 2013-14, the Ukrainian civil war, the accession of Crimea to Russia, the subsequent sanctions against Russia, Russia's entry into the war in Syria and the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015.

Looking back, it is relatively easy to see how Merkel tried to give the country a new direction, both in foreign and domestic policy.

For years, she had been trying to establish the term "market-compliant democracy" in politics and in people's minds. She understood it to mean exactly what the term suggests: A political system that gives the market precedence over politics. In other words, the economy creates its own state.



With the refugees as a result of the war in Syria, the problems of the world came visibly to Germany for the first time in many years. And they did so in a way that made existing laws absurd, at a pace and in numbers that overwhelmed Germany's polity and partially unhinged it.

The AfD is elected to the Bundestag

A good opportunity for the opposition in the Bundestag. Or so one would think. But there was not a trace of government opposition in the Bundestag.

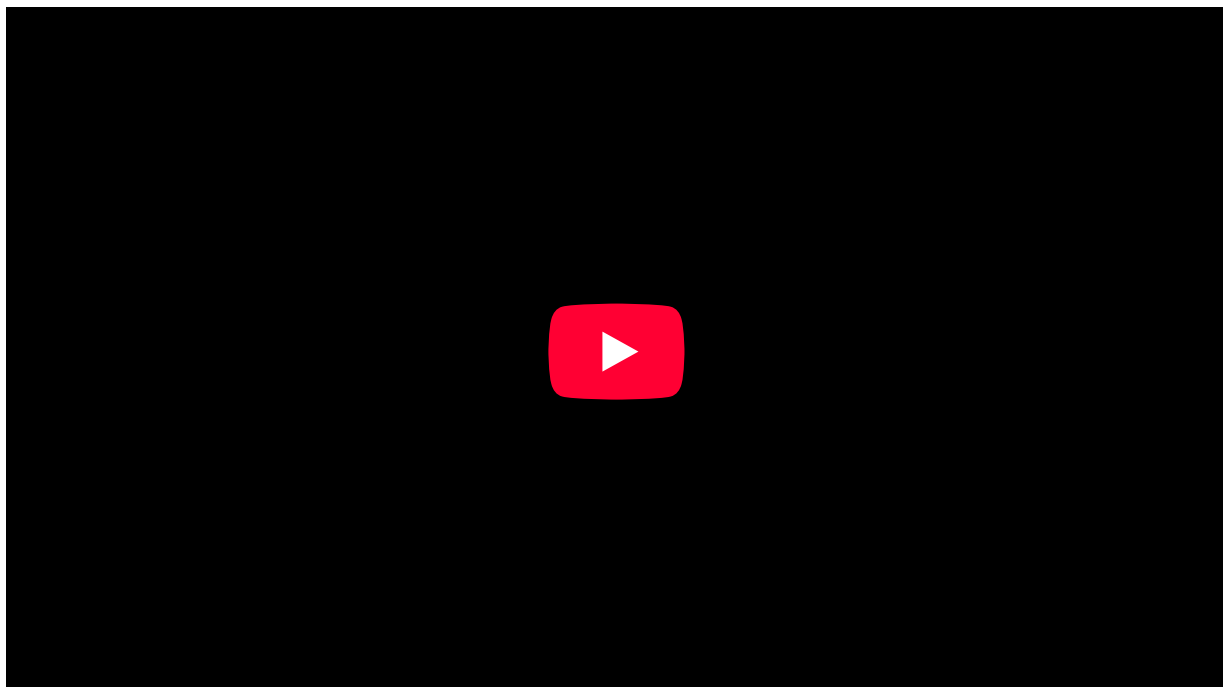
No one should be surprised that in such a tense, sometimes desolate domestic situation, a party like the AfD seized the opportunity to ask questions that no one else was asking. As a rule, the questions were not answered, and if they were, the answers led to new questions.

It was on this wave that the AfD was first elected to the Bundestag in the 2017 federal elections.

Since then, the handling of this party has followed the "democratic customs" installed by Merkel. Merkel speaks indeed again and again of a professional confrontation with the AfD, of the fact that one must put the AfD content. But did she mean what she said?

A substantive debate is generally understood to mean the discussion of arguments presented without regard to the person, i.e. a purely factual debate. Such a debate never took place with regard to the AfD. It was exclusively about personally attacking the protagonists of the AfD and their voters. And this was done within the framework of a cross-party coalition of the good against the evil.

There is no other way to describe this cheap polemic. The human and intellectual level at which this "debate" took place, and still does, was exemplified by the SPD member of the Bundestag Johannes Kahrs, here an example:



For the sake of completeness, it should also be mentioned that the united phalanx of all other parties - whether in government or in opposition - has since 2017 denied the AfD the post of vice president of the Bundestag to which it is actually entitled.

A local election makes waves

In recent weeks, political chasms have once again opened up in the former land of poets and thinkers. The AfD won a district council election! And a few days later, one of their own, Hannes Loth, became mayor in a place that 99% of Germans didn't previously know. Now they know him. Thanks to ZDF, ARD and what they are all called.

Raguhn-Jeßnitz is the name of this home town of just under 9,000 people in the Halle-Bitterfeld metropolitan area in Saxony-Anhalt, not far from Leipzig, where the reins of power have now been handed over to an AfD mayor. And an AfD district administrator rules in the Sonneberg district. Both regions are located in eastern Germany. Together, about 65,000 people live in both of the aforementioned municipal structures. By Germany's overall standards, a vanishing number.

Regardless of this, it seems as if the end of the world has now arrived in what Federal President Steinmeier calls "the best Germany of all time."

Is that really the case?

For some, it was simply elections with a somewhat unexpected result. For state and federal politicians and, of course, the mainstream media, however, it is almost the end of the world, if you believe the news.

Saxony's Minister President Kretschmer of the CDU opines:

"Something is slipping in this country." Further: "Blame and demarcation, instead of dealing with unpleasant truths." That is not responsible, he says. "It must now be about factual issues."

This is how the prime minister of Saxony comments on democratically held elections in the neighboring states of Thuringia and Saxony-Anhalt, states that are practically none of his business.

The Central Council of Jews in Germany is appalled by the Sonneberg election results.

Green Party leader Ricarda Lang let it be known via Twitter, "The result of the district council election in Sonneberg is dismaying ... And it's a warning to all democratic forces: now is the time, at the latest, when - despite all disputes on the matter - all democratic forces must defend democracy together."

SPD Bundestag member Michael Roth on the issue:

"I am touched." But he had "no conclusive answer."

"I think we have to face this bitter truth that there is obviously throughout Germany, and in some parts of Germany obviously more, a solidified contempt for democracy, a disdain for freedom."

The chairman of the Left Party, Martin Schirdewan expressed alarm: "We must now think very carefully about how to strengthen democracy at this point."

Notice something? All parties, from left to right, agree: what the voters have decided there cannot be, certainly not democratic. No, the voters even despise democracy!

This is what leading German politicians and representatives of social organizations say about elections that, according to all that is known, followed the rules that are recognized as democratic in Germany.

No electoral fraud, not even a hint of it. Yet democracy is threatened in this country.

Abuse of power

In the course of her time in office, ex-Chancellor Merkel left behind a trail of democratic devastation in the country and beyond, which laid the foundation for the neo-feudal behavior of today's generation of politicians.

And so the reaction of Thuringian politics is surprising only to those rooted in the democratic yesterday.

Because what can't be can't be, it's perfectly normal for the Thuringian state parliament to have the Thuringian State Administration Office, on behalf of the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior, check the suitability of Robert Sesselmann - that's the AfD district administrator elected in Sonneberg - to see if he's suitable as an electoral official. AFTER the election of Sesselmann.

To put it clearly: the procedure of the Thuringian Ministry of the Interior is about nothing more than a *Gesinnungsprüfung*. According to my understanding without any legal basis. After all, the candidates standing for election are known months in advance to the state agencies responsible for conducting the election. Among other things, to check their suitability for the offices they are seeking.

But a procedure of this kind, the correction of undesirable election results, is by no means new territory for Thuringia. Prime Minister Bodo Ramelow was already at the forefront when it came to sweeping the FDP politician Thomas Kemmerich, who was elected Thuringia's prime minister in February 2020 completely legally, out of office together with the then Chancellor Merkel - or rather on her behalf - also without any legal basis. Politicians and the press celebrated this at the time as the "Chancellor's word of power."

At that time, Chancellor Merkel picked up the phone from South Africa and with a "word of power" put the "democratic" puzzle pieces back in their usual place.

The intervention in the election process on the part of Merkel was so illegal that even the otherwise extremely Chancellor-friendly Federal Constitutional Court, at the request of the AfD, felt compelled to issue a ruling which, at other times, would probably have immediately led to a scandal with the resignation of the defendant Federal Chancellor. The Federal Constitutional Court's June 15, 2020 press release on the ruling states:

"In today's judgment, the Second Senate ruled that Chancellor Angela Merkel violated the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party's right to equal opportunity for parties under Article 21 (1) sentence 1 of the Basic Law by making a statement on the prime ministerial election in Thuringia during a press conference with the President of the Republic of South Africa in Pretoria on February 6, 2020, and subsequently publishing it on the websites of the Chancellor and the Federal Government."

The verdict had no consequences for any of the offenders.

Even more than the verdict, the facts underlying this verdict shed light on the state of German politics, which has probably not been darker and more hostile to democracy in a long, long time.

On February 06, 2020, Merkel said at a state reception in South Africa on the election of Thomas Kemmerich as Minister President in Thuringia:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I had already told the President that I would like to make a preliminary remark for domestic political reasons, referring to yesterday, when a Minister President was elected in Thuringia. The election of this Minister President was a unique event that broke with a fundamental conviction for the CDU and also for me, namely that no majorities should be won with the help of the AfD. Since this was foreseeable in the constellation in which elections were held in the third round, it must be said that this act is unforgivable and therefore the result

must be reversed. At the very least, the CDU must not participate in a government under the elected prime minister. It was a bad day for democracy." (author's emphasis)

This is the kind of politics that, while it has not just taken hold in this country since Merkel, has been driven to completely new heights by Merkel in particular. This is politics in the manner of the lord of the manor - what does not fit is "democratized away," made to fit.

Consequences of the moral brutalization of political morals

Where does this lead?

If you permanently exclude or try to exclude people or groups of people - i.e. also factions, parties, associations, etc. - and do so contrary to the rules that are recognized for others, then such behavior has an impact on the people and groups that are exposed to this pressure.

Therein lies the goal of such action. However, the reverse is also true. On both sides, a pressure to conform takes place, a coercion is exerted. The scourged tend to close ranks even more closely as a result.

And what about the others, the scourged? There, likewise and possibly in detail, an even stronger group pressure is exerted. Doubters are shown what happens when they leave the phalanx for whatever reason.

It is self-explanatory that the customs that have increasingly entered German politics since Merkel are not without consequences for society, especially since the anger of the established parties has increasingly extended from the AfD to AfD voters over the years. Probably as a result of the increasingly helpless and apparent attacks on the AfD itself.

Above all else, this trend is the result of the policies of Germany's ruling parties. And at present, apart from the AfD, all the other parties seem to be ruling, or at least believe they are, whether they are in government or not. For any criticism of government policy - which is the task of the opposition as a corrective in a parliamentary democracy - has for years come in the Bundestag practically only from the AfD.

Is it any wonder that, according to the polls, the AfD is gaining considerable support?

Every citizen can and must decide for himself to what extent such behavior is worthy of a parliament and a democracy. And apparently the citizens are reacting and changing their voting behavior, which they have been accustomed to for years. The question of "why" should be asked first and foremost by the established parties.

The resulting polarization, which is being promoted by politicians to the best of their ability, is not good for a society characterized by increasing economic and social dislocation.

Polarization - if not stopped, dealt with, resolved - is followed by radicalization. In case of further escalation, a next stage would be militarization....

If you look around carefully, you will have to admit that the signs are obvious. When was the last time there was a chancellor who had himself photographed with military equipment in the manner of Olaf Scholz...?

And then what comes ...? What will follow ...? Who will follow ...?

ARTICLE TAGS:

Analysis Merkel, Angela Kahrs, Johannes Germany AFD - Alternative für Deutschland
Scholz, Olaf Deutsche Bank CDU (Christian Democratic Union of Germany)
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