

# Establishment parties in Saxony place far-right AfD in key parliamentary positions

Martin Nowak  
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In December, the Saxony state legislature re-elected Michael Kretschmer (Christian Democrat, CDU) as state premier. He heads a minority government consisting of the CDU and Social Democrats (SPD). Now the members of the individual parliamentary committees have been appointed and include the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD).

It took the state parliament only 21 minutes to divide up all the parliamentary committees among the factions, reported broadcaster MDR. With the consent of the other parties, the AfD is filling key positions that are crucial for the expansion of a police state. The CDU and AfD each chair four committees, while the anti-migrant split-off from the Left Party, Bund Sarah Wagenknecht (BSW), and SPD each chair one.

What we wrote in December, that all the parties were “moving closer together and further to the right,” has now been vividly confirmed. Although the AfD had already chaired some committees in the past, it has never been represented in so many and, above all, such important ones. Even before his election, state Premier Kretschmer had declared he wanted to work more closely with all parties, including the AfD, by regularly consulting them.

According to the Saxony state parliament website, committees “ensure effective parliamentary work by preparing deliberations and resolutions for the plenary session.” Among other things, they are tasked with recommending bills and motions to the state parliament and thus preparing “technical and political decisions for the plenary session.” The committee chair not only manages and plans the meetings, but also decides on the motions and topics to be discussed.

With the votes of the CDU—and to some extent those of the SPD and BSW—right-wing extremists have now been elected to chair the justice, interior, education and

finance committees. Furthermore, the AfD provides the deputy chair of the economic, science and petitions committees, as well as the committee for rules of procedure and immunity matters.

The AfD also provides the deputy chair for the coronavirus committee of inquiry, which was established in October with votes from the AfD and BSW—but all parties had voted in favour of setting up such a body. Since all parties now advocate a policy of allowing the pandemic to run unchecked—and the AfD and BSW are notorious for playing down the seriousness of coronavirus—this committee will primarily serve to spread disinformation and conspiracy theories.

A glance at the AfD representatives highlights the reactionary political character of this party, which draws its members largely from the security, police and state apparatus, while at the same time presenting itself as a party of peace and freedom.

Holger Hentschel, the future head of the finance committee, was a regular in the Luftwaffe (Air Force) for eight years before joining the AfD in 2014 and working for them ever since.

Alexander Wiesner, chairman of the judiciary committee, not only bears a few scars as an old member of the *Corps Saxonia Leipzig* (modelled on the reactionary duelling student fraternities under the Kaiser), but until recently he also employed Kurt Hättasch in his state parliament office. Hättasch has been in custody since November as a member of the right-wing terrorist group Saxon Separatists.

Lars Kuppi, who is to head the internal affairs committee, served only two years in the Bundeswehr (Armed Forces) before joining the police in 1992. Most recently, he worked as a police sergeant in Chemnitz. He is a supporter of the formally dissolved AfD faction

around the fascist Björn Höcke and the now expelled neo-Nazi Andreas Kalbitz. Due to his open fraternisation with neo-Nazis, he was even expelled from the extreme right-wing police union.

Sebastian Wippel is another police officer who notoriously agitates against migrants and sits on the Parliamentary Control Committee for the AfD. Wippel, who, according to a 2020 ruling by the Görlitz Regional Court, may be publicly called a fascist, distributed flyers at a celebration of the Muslim Eid al-Fitr festival in 2018, which, among other things, called for people to leave the country.

A fascist is thus involved in monitoring police measures such as the “acoustic surveillance” of private dwellings and other “use of special means,” as described by the Saxony state parliament.

Saxony officials have been trampling on basic democratic rights so openly for decades that in 2011 even former Bundestag (federal parliament) Vice President Wolfgang Thierse spoke of the special “Saxon democracy.” Even before the AfD came on the scene, political show trials against Nazi opponents like Lothar König were the norm in Saxony. But now the far-right officials are openly allowed to monitor themselves.

Carsten Hütter sits for the AfD in the Parliamentary Control Commission, the body that oversees the Verfassungsschutz (domestic secret service) at the state level. Hütter served in the Bundeswehr for 12 years and retired as a staff sergeant in 1995.

In 2018, in the tradition of a better-known corporal named Adolf Hitler, he wanted to use a parliamentary question to record the number and all registered addresses of Sinti and Roma living in Saxony since 2010. He wants to have Antifa (the anti-fascist movement) banned as a group of serious criminals and radical left-wing terrorists.

In this, he is in line with the Saxony Verfassungsschutz, which for years refused to describe PEGIDA or the AfD as right-wing extremist, but at the same time defamed left-wing bands, concerts and protests as “left-wing extremist.” At the same time, the Verfassungsschutz is deeply involved in the neo-Nazi scene through a network of informants. The revelations surrounding the neo-Nazi National Socialist Underground (NSU), which murdered 10 people between 2000 and 2007, shine a spotlight on these state-

sponsored structures.

Finally, another soldier, André Wendt, was re-elected to the presidency of the state parliament. Wendt joined the Bundeswehr in 1993 and has been a professional soldier since 1999. As such, he was involved in missions in the former Yugoslavia and Afghanistan.

Some parties are now hypocritically feigning outrage in their criticism of this or that AfD appointment, but in reality, they all agree on the fundamental issues of increasing the repressive powers of the state, mass deportations and social cuts. That is why Kretschmer’s minority government can cling on to power with the support of all the parties represented in the state parliament.

Developments in Saxony belie all talk of a supposed “firewall” against collaborating with the AfD. Above all, they show how far advanced the integration of this far-right party into the state already is.

How quickly the self-proclaimed “parties of the democratic centre” forget their promises to shun the far-right was recently made clear in Austria. There, the sister party of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the conservative Austrian People’s Party (ÖVP), is preparing to enter a federal government under the neo-Nazi Herbert Kickl of the Austrian Freedom Party.

The return of far-right and fascist elements into the day-to-day business of government is a worldwide phenomenon. The way for this has been paved in particular by those pseudo-left forces—also in Saxony—that have constantly preached a policy of the “lesser evil” and suppressed any independent movement of the working class.



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