

Germany's AfD party: against market radicalism and plutocratic capitalism

Rainer Zitelmann(<https://reaction.life/author/rainer-zitellman/>) August 9, 2023(<https://reaction.life/2023/08/09/>)



AfD rally in Berlin, Germany (via De Visu/ Shutterstock)



The language used and economic policy program espoused by **Maximilian Krah** (<https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-alternative-fur-deutschland-european-parliament-election-maximilian-krah-migration/>), who has just been chosen as the lead candidate for the European elections by **Germany's right-wing AfD party** (<https://reaction.life/the-rise-of-germanys-anti-capitalist-right/>), have much in common with those of the political left.

According to the latest polls, support for the right-wing AfD party continues to grow. The AfD is now the second strongest party in **Germany** (<https://reaction.life/germanys-re-routed-foreign-policy-path/>), with a prospective share of between 18 and 22 percent of the vote, and has managed to cement its position as the strongest party in many of Germany's eastern states. At its European party congress, the AfD elected Maximilian Krah, a member of the European Parliament, as its lead candidate for next year's European elections.

Krah recently published a "manifesto" – **Politics from the Right** (<https://antaios.de/gesamtverzeichnis-antaios/einzeltitel/181671/politik-von-rechts.-ein-manifest>) (Maximilian Krah, *Politik von rechts. Ein Manifest*, Verlag Antoaios, Schnellroda, 2023) – in which he laid out his policy aims, including on the economy. The book is revealing because the AfD's official manifesto was adopted in the spring of 2016 when the party's pro-market wing was a great deal stronger than it is today. What Krah writes is likely to better reflect current mainstream thinking within the AfD than the party's seven-year-old policy program.

Just like politicians from all parties in Germany – up to the left wing of the SPD and Die Linke – Krah also makes a striking commitment to private property and the market economy. But more important than these striking professions are the limitations. "Right-wing politics, which is built around the rootedness of the human being, a life centered on the ego, with identity as the fundamental concept, is thus always in tension with the market," says Krah, the AfD's lead candidate. The market shows "no consideration for tradition, nature or identity" and has no "human dignity." And that, according to Krah, is why right-wing parties should resolutely oppose "market radicalism."



“Market radicalism” is a term that left-wing **anti-capitalists** (<https://reaction.life/bernie-sanders-blueprint-for-the-united-socialist-states-of-america/>) are also very fond of. And just like the left, Krah emphasises “the primacy of political interests” over the market. His “manifesto” is dotted with terms typically associated with anti-capitalist, anti-consumerism, for example, when he attacks the “trash and filth of our throwaway society.” Krah is generally skeptical about the benefits of the prosperity of the “Western, liberal economy,” because this prosperity has marginalised those on the right of the political spectrum.

Of course, Krah makes space to criticise the “sell-off of almost all of Germany’s biggest corporations” to the U.S. “vulture capitalists at Blackrock,” echoing recent broadsides from the CDU leader Friedrich Merz. Krah is equally skeptical when it comes to globalisation, because, in his opinion, it goes “hand in hand with extreme liberalism.” His views on free trade are similar. He declares his commitment to free trade, and then immediately follows up with a long list of caveats. Trade restrictions are necessary, he says, because “products carry political and cultural messages.” As an example, Krah cites Coca Cola, which stands for the “American way of life” and thus promotes “cultural transformation.”

National and regional platforms, Krah argues, should take the place of global brands such as Google. The political right, he proposes, should also not shy away from opposing “elite migration” – meaning board members of companies who are not of German descent. Russian vodka instead of Coca Cola and a ban on work for managers without a German passport?

Krah also sets his sights on “plutocratic capitalism.” In his opinion, it is necessary to tackle the scourge of the super-rich, especially when the accumulation of wealth – as with internet pioneers – has taken place in one generation. The goals of these super-rich are “mostly opaque and ultimately sinister,” he explains. It is also bad when companies strive to gain “potentially the whole world as a customer.” On this point, he is grateful that “Right-wing economics, however, is based on the idea that states have economies, and not that a global economy has states as mere subsidiaries.”

Most of Krah’s affirmations would probably also attract the support of left-wingers, in some respects they are not unusual, but expressions of the anti-capitalist consensus that has developed in Germany today. The only reason they are remarkable is because left-wing opponents continue to criticize the AfD for its “market radicalism” and “economic liberalism,” even though it has gradually abandoned its previous economic policy positions.

It may be that there are still a few isolated free-market supporters in the AfD, but the election of Maximilian Krah is further evidence that a different position has now prevailed. This has given the AfD a boost in recent elections, especially in eastern Germany, where anti-capitalism is even more widespread than in the west. It has also succeeded in winning over sections of the electorate from Die Linke and the SPD.

Incidentally, the book’s foreword was written by the AfD’s founder and honorary chairman Alexander Gauland: “The fact that some of his insights echo Sahra Wagenknecht [a former leading figure in the DIE LINKE party],” Gauland praises, “is what makes the whole thing even more exciting ... Maximilian Krah and Sahra Wagenknecht are united by social conservatism.”

Sign up for our FREE Reaction Weekend Email

Every Saturday:

Read the week’s best-read articles on politics, business and geopolitics

Receive offers and exclusive invites

Plus uplifting cultural commentary

SIGN UP

We see the same tendency in Europe: Anti-capitalism is not only intensifying on the Left, but it is also increasing on the Right. The radical Right in many European countries — France, for example — has adopted traditionally left-wing economic policies.

The author has also published the book *In Defence of Capitalism* (<https://in-defence-of-capitalism.com/>)

Write to us with your comments to be considered for publication at letters@reaction.life
(<mailto:letters@reaction.life>)

