

## Chat group leak reveals far-right fantasies of Germany's AfD

Among tens of thousands of posts is talk of jailing Angela Merkel, calls for armed resistance, and homophobia



*Alice Weidel is among the AfD leaders accused of having weak strategies and of failing to boost the party's profile.*

**Kate Connolly** in Berlin  
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The leaked contents of a WhatsApp chat group associated with Germany's far-right AfD has offered an unfiltered glimpse into party discussions, including fantasies over the imprisonment of Angela Merkel, homophobic attacks and armed resistance.

Called the Quasselgruppe, or "yakking group", the chat contains conversations between 76 of the 92 Alternative für Deutschland MPs who entered parliament in 2017 for the first time after the federal election.

It contains about 40,000 posts sent from 2017 to 2021 and was passed on by an anonymous AfD member last summer to journalists from the broadcasters NDR and WDR who were making a documentary about the party.

The discussions focus on topics including the US presidential election, the pandemic and how the aggressively nationalistic AfD should position itself with regards to the Querdenker movement, a coronavirus denial group.

It also touches on other events that deeply shocked the political world in Germany, such as the storming of the Reichstag building in September 2020 by demonstrators protesting against coronavirus safety measures who were assisted by AfD members, and the constitutional crisis, also in 2020, triggered by the collaboration between the AfD and the CDU that enabled the election of a state premier in Thuringia.

Also discussed are the homophobic attacks on the former health minister Jens Spahn, and the SPD MP Johannes Kahrs.

There are calls for regime change, reflecting some of the language widely heard among anti-Merkel street protests in some parts of eastern Germany, with one calling for the “old regime” to be brought to an end, predicting a “ruthless battle” for which it would be necessary to arm.

On Merkel, then chancellor, one post read: “This traitor deserves to be sent to prison until the end of her life.”

Indications of internal party disagreements are rife. There is criticism about the party leadership’s failure to not have “pulled the plug” sooner on its radical wing, known as “der Flügel” or wing, due largely to the bad publicity it brought.

Parliamentary leaders Alice Weidel, Alexander Gauland and Tino Chrupulla are accused repeatedly in the chat of having weak strategies and of failing to boost the party’s profile.

There is also much disgruntlement over the AfD’s failure to make its mark in parliament, with some MPs referring to their own parliamentary faction as a “chaos outfit”.

Weidel was reported to have lost her temper at a meeting of parliamentary colleagues when news of the leaks came to light, asking them how it was that the internal communications had been made public. She told the makers of the documentary that she had not been part of the group, that she distanced herself from the remarks and had become accustomed to calls to oust her.

After the party was made aware of the leak, internal discussions led the party to switch to communicating on Telegram instead.

The AfD, which was founded in 2013, entered the Bundestag for the first time in September 2017.