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On May 14, 2024, a state court in Halle, Germany, fined Björn Höcke, a prominent member of the far-right Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party, €13,000 for using a banned Nazi slogan during a 2021 campaign speech. Höcke, the head of the AfD in Thuringia, used the phrase “everything for Germany,” which is associated with the Nazi paramilitary wing, the SA, at a rally in Merseburg, Saxony-Anhalt.

Höcke, a former history teacher, claimed he was unaware of the slogan’s Nazi origins, but the court found this improbable due to his background. Prosecutors had sought a six-month suspended sentence, while defense attorneys called for acquittal. The trial, which began last month, attracted anti-AfD protesters and considerable media attention.

Germany's laws strictly prohibit the use of Nazi symbols, slogans, and propaganda. Höcke, who has led the Thuringian AfD chapter since 2013, has faced legal issues before, including charges of criminal incitement and surveillance by the domestic intelligence agency due to his party’s extremist views.

The AfD is polling strongly ahead of upcoming European Parliament and regional elections, but mainstream parties have vowed not to collaborate with it in any ruling coalitions.

Christopher F. Schuetze contributed to this report.