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Germany

Brandenburg elections - a black eye?

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The 2024 cycle of German regional elections finished with the elections to the Brandenburg Landtag on 21 September. As was the case on 1 September in Saxony and Thuringia, the far-right AfD (Alternative for Germany) party achieved historic results and can feel a winner. Co-president Alice Weidel can be jubilant: 'The East is blue' (the AfD's colour scheme).

Two of the central government parties were eliminated: the 'Grünen' and the Liberals failed to break the 5% barrier and no longer have any elected members in the Brandenburg Landtag, just like Die Linke. The consequences for the Bundesregierung remain to be seen: many liberal politicians are already talking about an 'autumn of decisions'. They are considering leaving the government coalition and would like to block even more minor social reforms...

In Brandenburg, the AfD is the second largest party, while social democracy remains the largest. With 30.9% of the vote, the SPD was slightly ahead of the AfD (29.2%). Did we come away with just a black eye?

On the Saturday before the elections, a demonstration was held in Potsdam: 'Potsdam remains multicoloured', 'Hate is not an opinion', 'Human rights instead of right-wingers'. The 'People instead of Ditches' alliance and the 'Kein Bock auf Nazis' (Nazis, we've had enough!) initiative had called for this demonstration. Lots of music and a clear line against the far right. Maybe that helped.

No reason to raise the alarm

The SPD and its popular Minister-President Dietmar Woidke gained 4.9 points in a furious final sprint. But the AfD gained 5.9 points and obtained results well above the average, particularly among the youngest voters (there were 2.1 million voters, including 16-18 year-olds). So there's no reason to let our guard down. Where kindergarten children sing 'Germany for Germans, foreigners out' in a circle early in the morning, the next great catastrophe is brewing in Germany and beyond.

The results of these regional elections are certainly not a boost for the tricolour coalition (SPD, FDP, Greens) and the SPD at national level. Woidke had even refrained from showing federal SPD figures. The Greens left the Landtag with 4.1% (down 6.6 points) and the FDP fell below 1% of the vote. This was one of the few pleasing results of these elections. Lindner's proposals (the leader of the liberal FDP party and finance minister) on share-based pensions, taking even more money from the poorest and asking those who, unlike him, have to toil to work even harder and even longer, were perhaps not so well received.

CDU in disarray, the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance dynamic

But the Union parties have nothing to celebrate either. They only obtained 12.1% and lost 3.5 points. There is no doubt that the CDU fell victim to the polarisation between the SPD and the AfD: many people voted unconvincingly for the SPD in order to avoid an AfD majority.

Kretschmar, the head of government in Saxony and a member of the CDU, even publicly called for a vote for the SPD, which has now earned him a good slap in the face. The victims of this polarisation have of course also been the smaller parties. The fact remains that Merz's attempt to make the AfD lose votes by adapting to his aggressive refugee and immigration policy has once again failed spectacularly.

For the third time, the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance (BSW) obtained a double-digit result from the outset. It entered the regional parliament with 13.5%. This gave it 14 seats in the Landtag, more than the CDU (12). With a total of 88 MPs, the SPD (with 32 MPs compared to 30 for the AfD) can only govern if it forms a coalition with the BSW. The BSW is opposed to further military aid for Ukraine and the deployment of new US missiles in Germany. In fact, these are its voting behaviours in the Bundesrat (Federal Council, the parliamentary chamber of the German Federal Republic in which the Länder governments are represented). On the other hand, the BSW, as a small partner in such a governmental alliance, could quickly disappoint its electorate. In a recent poll, many people said they were pleased that the BSW had a party that was both in favour of greater social justice and in favour of limiting immigration.

On election night, AfD list leader Hans-Christoph Berndt made it clear whose spiritual son he was when he exclaimed: "The National Front is on its feet ! The AfD's federal figures generally put water in their wine when television journalists question them about the Nazi rhetoric of their most extreme right-wing followers, as when it comes to 'remigration': for God's sake, they're not German citizens or well-integrated people, etc. But the agitation on the ground is not enough. But the agitation on the ground is different.

Die Linke faces new tasks

The Die Linke party was eliminated from the regional parliament with 3% (down 7.7 points!). At least it fared better among young people, with a result of 7%. Perhaps it wasn't such a good idea to get rid of all traces of insubordination and let the right take over. Incidentally, the AfD is by far the leader on social networks, Facebook, Instagram and especially Tiktok. Their professionally produced propaganda is particularly effective there. The left should form teams to engage effectively on these levels - always in conjunction with offers of action in the analogue world.

But what do we, the forces of the radical left, have to do to enthuse young people? To take joint action across the borders of countries and regions of the world? It is only when those who are exploited, oppressed and discriminated against unite that they can change something in their own interest: by fighting against the truly powerful, against big capital and its servants. By fighting racism, all racism. Then there will be no more 'foreigners' to isolate and throw out. There are people who stick together and prevent a world from sinking.

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Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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