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Germany

Heavy Defeat for Social Democrats in North Rhine Westphalia

- News from around the world -

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The result of the regional elections in North Rhine - Westphalia last Sunday (May 22) was a heavy defeat for the Social Democratic Party (and their coalition-partner, the Green Party) in their stronghold, the region with the largest population, in which the SPD has been in government for 39 years.

Immediately after the first results were published, the General Secretary of the SPD announced general elections for next autumn.

The Social Democrats lost more than five percent of their votes, while the Christian Democrats won more than seven and will be able to govern in coalition with the Liberal Party.

[<https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/angela.merkel2.jpg>]
CDU leader Angela Merkel - likely to replace Schroeder as Chancellor

The newly formed neo-reformist "Wahlalternative" (Jobs and Social Justice Party) achieved 2,1 % and failed to get into parliament (in Germany there is a 5% threshold).

The fact that only 60% of those eligible turned out to vote, shows that a growing part of the population is disillusioned with the ruling parties in general. The result was no surprise. All polls before the election saw the Christian Democrats in front. A surprise was the announcement of general elections - even the Chairwoman of the Green Party was not informed about that before the announcement was made.

The background to this decision is, on the one hand, the fact that in the second chamber of German Parliament, the Bundesrat, the Christian Democrats are now able to block a big part of the policies of the federal government. On the other hand, this manoeuvre is also an attempt to give the other parties less time for preparation and campaigning, especially the "Wahlalternative".

The election result for this newly formed party, in which a big part of the radical left, former Social Democrats and active members and functionaries of the trade unions are organized, is not bad at all. Leading members said in advance that everything above 2% would be a success.

There are rumours that there are plans to run in the general elections together with the PDS (successor of the former ruling party of German Democratic Republic), which achieved a result around 1% in North Rhine Westphalia, but one of the leading members of the PDS has already categorically denied that.

In the elections in the autumn the most probable variant is that the Christian Democrats will take over the federal government. The whole radical left in Germany must be committed to installing a left opposition force in the next federal parliament, not to leave the space to the SPD, and to build a pole for a left alternative