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Germany

Right coalition elected

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The German general elections of September 27, 2009 have given a clear majority to a right-wing coalition government between the Christian Democrats and the liberal FDP.

[https://www.internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/090928_pk_kulturbrauerei.jpg]

<http://die-linke.de/wahlen/aktuell/>

The result is due to two factors: the Social Democrats suffered, with a loss of 11.2 %, their most serious defeat in a general election since the end of the war. Their 23 % score is also the lowest since 1949. They lost 4.5 million votes (out of 45 million voters), of whom 1.6 million did not vote, while 780,000 voted for Die Linke, 710,000 for the Greens and 620,000 for the Christian-Democrats. Die Linke took some of the SPD votes, but could not absorb the mass of Social Democrats voters who preferred not to vote at all.

With this score, German Social Democracy has declined to the "30 % ghetto" which Willy Brandt had exited from in 1972. On the evening of the elections, the social democratic youth group demanded a change of direction; it seems fairly clear that the SPD will operate an opening towards coalitions with Die Linke at all levels. However the biggest handicap for a red-red-green perspective at the federal level remains the foreign policy orientation of Die Linke. In a situation of political normality, i.e. of bourgeois political domination, it is virtually excluded that the Federal Government should contain a party which is against NATO. As with the Greens previously, Die Linke must change its position in this matter if it wants access to the Federal Government. So we can expect conflicts around this issue in Die Linke.

The second factor is the growth of the FDP who recorded with 14.6 % their best result since 1949. They benefited mainly from a tactical vote transfer from the Christian Democrats, especially in Bavaria. The CSU, which is the Christian Democrat party in Bavaria, paid the cost; whereas previously it had an absolute majority, this time it only won 41% of the vote. Many of its voters voted for the FDP with their proportional vote and for the candidate of the CSU with their constituency vote (in Germany we vote in one round with two votes). The result of the CSU is responsible for the slight loss of votes for the Christian Democrats at the federal level (-1.4 %). Behind this decline there also lurks a continuous decline in the CSU party-State in Bavaria. The FDP fiefdoms are located mainly in the South of Germany: in Baden-Württemberg and in Bavaria, that is to say in the more comfortable regions less affected by unemployment.

The next Federal Parliament will therefore be divided into two camps: the bourgeois camp and the oppositional camp consisting of the SPD, Die Linke and the Greens. In principle, this constellation could be an opportunity to formulate a political and societal alternative worthy of the name and present in the trade union and social movement struggles in a way which would be equal to the foreseeable attacks. In principle, Die Linke could head such an orientation, if it was not itself divided between a wing (especially in the East) that conceives politics in the traditional institutional sense and would only administer the crisis of capitalism and a poorly organised and divided minority which wants an end to capitalism. All will depend on whether the unions return to the field of struggle.