

Germany: A Political Earthquake

Via [Viento Sur](#)

Hardly any federal parliamentary election has altered and shaken the party system as much as this one. The electorate continued to become more fragmented: never before has it happened that the party with the largest share of the electorate reached only a fifth of the electorate. To speak of mass parties under these conditions is to confuse wishful thinking with reality; the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) are on their way to becoming client parties, as is the Freedom Party (FDP). It is clear that they no longer have any political offer to make to the general population.

The SPD, however much it claims to be the winner in these elections, remains stuck in the electoral hole it sank into after Schröder's term [and the neoliberal labor reform he implemented]. The CDU, meanwhile, is a pile of rubble after the retirement of the chancellor who governed for 16 years: quite a swing for this lady they now praise so highly.

Various crises – financial and euro crises, the debate over the reception of refugees, turmoil in the European Union, the disaster in Afghanistan, the health crisis, climate change, and of course persistent social inequality – have shaken confidence in the political class and shown that it has little ability to offer lasting answers to existential questions. Resistance means: thinking about future generations, making social justice the decisive criterion for politics at the national and global level.

It is quite possible that a tripartite coalition will now be formed, which would also be a first at the federal level,

although such coalitions have long existed in various Länder. It remains to be seen, of course, whether the SPD will take the absurd risk of governing in coalition with the CDU again.

In any case, no matter how much the interested propaganda insists, the result of these elections does not represent a shift to the left. There is not much left-wing politics in the disappointed Green Party, and the SPD is keeping its doors open to the left and the right. The leftmost party among the relevant parties is on the losing side; Die Linke has the worst result in its fifteen-year history and is on par with its predecessor, the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), which was very strong in the eastern part of Germany.

The fact that an SPD led by one of the protagonists of labor reform has managed to marginalize Die Linke forces the party to ask itself some serious questions. If it is enough for Social Democracy to move a little to the left lane to endanger Die Linke's parliamentary existence, it needs to be talked about: about the political usefulness of the party itself to the electorate beyond its closest supporters, and whether it is more than a mere flanker for the SPD.

"Turning the program for the masses into a mass movement is a very difficult task in the weeks between now and the federal parliamentary elections," they commented after the Die Linke congress in June. This has been the case, and it is now necessary to engage in a debate about existing problems and the party's relationship to its electorate. Because with a 5% result, one can speak of a serious crisis of relations. Die Linke needs a bath to clear the atmosphere, a debate about content, about its attractiveness among young people, and about how to deal with internal disagreements. There will be no simple answers.