

After the Election: Instability Remains

by Our Wiesbaden Bureau

Sept. 30—A week after Germany's parliamentary elections on Sept. 22, the political situation is still unstable. Although Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) received 41.5% of the vote, against 25.7% for its nearest competitor, the Social Democratic Party (SPD), the CDU/CSU still lacks a parliamentary majority and therefore is obliged to form a coalition government. That is proving to be easier said than done.

Given the quarrels among the parties, President Joachim Gauck took the unusual step of inviting the leaders of all parties elected into parliament for individual consultations. Formally, if coalition talks should fail, the President has to decide on the dissolution of parliament and new elections.

No Real Choice

All the parliamentary parties are in favor of the euro system and bank bail-outs and bail-ins, against nuclear power and for "renewables." The only party that offered a real alternative, the Civil Rights Solidarity Movement (BüSo), headed by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, did not clear the 5% hurdle required to enter the parliament. That requirement was also not met by the Free Democratic Party (FDP, which was in Merkel's coalition in the previous government, but got 4.8% this time) and the new, fake "anti-euro" party, the Alternative for Germany (AfD, with 4.8%), whose main function was to draw votes away from the BüSo.

All coalition options are equally poor for the citizens of Germany. A "Grand Coalition" of the CDU/CSU and SPD would have a majority large enough to change the Constitution in favor of even greater "Europeanization" of Germany, to the detriment of national sovereignty, should the financial oligarchy demand it. Among SPD voters, 56% support a Grand Coalition according to one poll, but several powerful sections of the party oppose the idea. Other options are a CDU/Greens



Bundesregierung/Denzel

Christian Democrat Angela Merkel on the campaign trail in Ehrenhof, Aug. 25. Her euphoria over her party's winning the highest margin of votes in the Sept. 22 election now gives way to battles over how to form a coalition. None of the parliamentary parties offer solutions to the voters.

coalition (the Greens got 8.4% of the vote), or an SPD/Greens/Left Party (the Left—die Linke—got 8.6%).

One significant outcome was the relatively low voter turnout: 71.6%, in a country where turnout is traditionally very high (the postwar high was 91.% in 1972; in 1998 it was 82.2%, and in the last election, in 2009, it was 70.8%). Of those who did vote, 15.7% voted for parties that are not now in parliament. The upshot is that the parliamentary parties represent only 55% of the national electorate: Politics has been alienated from the people, and vice versa.

Another unusual feature was widespread "irregularities" in the election, which is not often seen in a country which has been considered very "correct" in these matters, and frequently lectures others on how they should hold fair and correct elections. Absentee ballots were "lost" in several cities (some were found later at the post office, and in Essen, several sealed bags stuffed with ballots were found in an elevator); in Oberhausen, some voters received 2009 ballots. The Federal Election office says it is investigating all such claims, but that it is not possible to "reconstruct every single case afterwards." The scandals are doing nothing to improve the electorate's trust in their political leaders.