

## German Elections to Bundestag The Rise of Neo-Nazi AfD

**German** chancellor Angela Merkel, as was expected by many, won a fourth term in office with reduced voting. Her party Christian Democratic Union (CDU) emerged as a single largest party in Bundestag (Parliament) with just 32.2 per cent of the vote. Her social democratic rival SPD won only 20.8 per cent of the vote. These two parties that have dominated German political arena since 1949 when first national election was held after the Second World War were repudiated by nearly half of the voters. By winning 13.1 per cent of the vote, the Neo-Nazi party, Alternative for Germany, entered the parliament with 90 seats for the first time.

Angela Merkel has to face now the task of building a coalition government. SPD expressed that it will now go into opposition as for it “the grand coalition ends today” which they formed with Merkel four years back. The neoliberal and openly pro-bourgeois party, Free Democrats (FDP) and Green party are ready to join the coalition. They call it Jamaica coalition because the black, yellow and green colours of these three parties match the Jamaican Flag. This could be an uneasy coalition as the FDP and Green have not won enough seats to give Merkel a majority. Merkel, until now considered as an “anchor of stability” in Europe and beyond, has to content with an unstable situation.

All the parties in the German parliament, which have all these years overtly or covertly encouraged the Neo-Nazi AfD are now expressing outwardly against working with AfD. With more than 90 deputies in the coming parliament, AfD is now a force that cannot be ignored or wished away. It is a Nazi and racist organisation. Alexander Gaulland, who is going to lead AfD in the parliament, many times called upon the Germans to be proud of the achievements of German soldiers in two world wars. This Nazi party is entering Bundestag 72 years after the downfall of Hitler. The rise of AfD is not an isolated case. The Political Resolution of CPI (ML) stated: “Across Europe the ruling classes are encouraging neo-Nazi forces and their organisations by raking up racism through anti-immigrant feeling. This is the strategy adopted by the west European imperialist powers to divert the growing anger of people against deteriorating conditions of life which was the result of crisis inherent in the capitalist system”.

The crisis of capitalism of 2008 that brought down entire financial system and ushered in brutal austerity measures has constantly eroded the living standards of the people. All the measures taken by the imperialists have not abated the crisis and they are resorting to more harsh methods to throw the burden of crisis onto the backs of people. They are using terrorism to this end and are encouraging fascist forces to cover their austerity measures. For the last two years they are using the refugee and immigrant problem to rake up racism.

As a result the far right fascist parties are gaining strength. In Britain, anti-immigrant United Kingdom Independent Party (UKIP) emerged as a leading force during the Brexit referendum. In France, National Front leader Marine Le Pen polled 34 per cent of the vote in presidential elections pushing to side lines the two main political parties that dominated France for the last 50 years. The neo fascist Freedom Party is going to enter the parliament following next month’s elections in Austria. Donald Trump’s fascist outbursts saddled him in the seats of power.

The German ruling class parties, that encouraged neo fascist forces, are now utilising the rise of AfD to adopt far right policies, The German people displayed humanitarian concern for refugees – those who have fled from hunger and those who are displaced by the imperialist wars. AfD preached that Germany should use the right to decide who should be allowed in to the country. When the CDU and SPD talked about the “limited acceptance” of refugees, AfD called it as a “betrayal of our own people”. Now the SPD leader Steinmeir called for a harder line on refugee policy. The Christian

social Union (CSU), the sister party of CDU in Bavaria, gave a call for upper limit on refugees during the election campaign, The Green party is now supporting CSU slogan and advocating tougher policy on refugees. The Left Party, which is power in many states of former East Germany, also began calling for tougher policy on refugees.

The essence of sloganeering on refugee policy is that it has to serve the interests of German bourgeoisie better. They are ready to allow any immigrant, who sells his labour power cheaply, but not on humanitarian grounds. The phrases like limited acceptance, harsher line, tougher attitude and right to decide are only cloak to disguise the reality and to fan the anti-immigrant feeling.

The rise of AfD is only a pretext for the German ruling classes. The very policies of exploitation and oppression pursued by them gave the opportunity to the AfD to appeal to the unemployed and impoverished sections of German people. In the name of countering AfD, they are imposing the harsh austerity measures on the German people. The re-election of Merkel makes it clear that much more harsh policies of exploitation and oppression, both inside and out-side Germany, are in the offing.

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