

# German Elections

by Hilmar von Campe

German elections for the Bundestag (House of Representatives) on September 22 left the far left red/green coalition with a narrow margin in power. The election system in Germany, like in most European countries, is different from that in the US. The national government comes out of the party, which gains most votes. There is no direct election for the head of government.

The American media reported in their majority that chancellor Gerhard Schroeder won the election. This, however, is not quite correct. It is his coalition, which won. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) is represented by the chancellor, while the opposition, the conservative block of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) and the Christian Social Union (CSU), is represented by Edmund Stoiber. Both sides received 38,5% of the votes. The real winner, however, was Schroeder's coalition partner: The Green Party, which outnumbered Stoiber's partner, The Free Democratic Party (a free market group) by 8,6% versus 7,4%. That tipped the scales. The only good news of the election is the fact that the 'former' Communists now under a new name, Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), were ousted. They received 4%. According to the election law a party has to have 5% of the votes in order to get into parliament.

Compared to the elections 4 years ago the SPD lost 1,750,000 votes, of which 1,180,000 went to the conservative block. The only gains the SPD could register were 310,000 votes from the PDS, mainly because of Schroeder's refusal to back president Bush on Iraq. Schroeder had been several points behind Stoiber during the summer. That changed when he made the possible war in Iraq shortly before the election a central issue in his campaign and mobilized the anti-American sentiment in Germany in his favor. He got even and his coalition won because of this. Any other consideration didn't matter. Later on, I am sure, he will find a reason to turn around again, politicians always find good sounding arguments for whatever they want to do. But some pretty nasty words about America came from the upper hierarchy of his party.

After victory was achieved, mending of relations began. Foreign minister Joschka Fischer, head of the Green Party, found beautiful words, "The US is indispensable for peace and stability. We owe our liberation from National Socialism to the Americans... And it is also thanks to America, particularly to the administration at

that time, that it was possible for Germany to reunite in peace and freedom." He condemned the words of a cabinet minister who compared president Bush to Hitler and had to resign because of it.

**B**ut nevertheless there is a subtle European anti-American coalition in the making. France, Germany and Russia are opposed to an American policy, which acts independently according to her constitution and not according to an international denominator. Therefore they try to force the US government into the UN framework to ask permission for military action from the United Nations Security Council, fight tooth and nail that the US accepts the rules of the International Criminal Court, and make her a part of their own throat-cutting tax systems, which they want to establish globally. Therewith they want to eliminate the advantage American companies have because of lower taxes. They want to control what used to be the freest country in world by making it part of the global socialist system of world government.

**T**he first words you heard from the coalition after the election victory was the demand for higher taxes. These imbeciles want to raise the inheritance tax, reintroduce the tax on higher fortunes (declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court), possibly raise the value-added tax (kind of sales tax already at 16%) and introduce a fuel tax for airlines. All of this in spite of the already existing stifling taxes imposed by the coalition on the German people, largely responsible for the economic decline of a country which used to be the economic engine of Europe and now belongs to the weakest group in Europe, "the sick man of Europe" as the British news magazine *The Economist* puts it. There is a myriad of laws that transform economic activities into a nightmare like the one, which makes construction companies liable for the payment of the sales tax by the sub-contractors. Small business people are suffocated by the net of administrative rules thrown over them by the government, such as the one forcing them to "advise" the tax authorities on a monthly basis the expected turnover. In Germany today you see the philosophy of class struggle coming from the benches of the government, destroying the middle class and the nation and you can't help looking at the Daschles and Gephardtts in Washington.

**T**he European tax system is based on the concept that the government establishment rightfully disposes of the people's money if there is a majority of thieves in parliament and that the people who pay their whims in turn have to accept what this establishment decrees. It is not compatible with the American philosophy that the government is a servant of the people and administers the

people's money and not their money even though the reality is very often quite different. Also the European concept of freedom is not identical with the American concept. Europeans much easier give away parts of their sovereignty, but nevertheless consider themselves free and want to push the US into the same mindset.

Finally, a recent poll found that 97% of Germans don't want their country to participate in a war against Iraq. 76% think that Bush gives the impression of hiding the real reasons for the war.

I am not promoting war with Iraq. I am dealing with the motivation of Schroeder and the reasons for the election victory. I believe that American security for America comes first and that it would be very dangerous to give a terrorist sponsoring state the possibility to expand its base without challenge. What I consider very dangerous, however, is the concentration on a smaller gangster state as the main fountain of evil while at the same time describing the big gangster states, Soviet Russia and China, as part of our value system. These two have more than anybody else made it possible for Iraq to be such a threat. Foreign policy has to be conducted on the basis of the same principle, which is applied to the dealing with every nation.

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