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Germany

No accident- On the 'coup' in Thuringia

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Thomas Kemmerich knew what he did when he accepted his election as prime minister of Thuringia in the Landtag of Erfurt. He was not surprised by the result, it was rather part of his political calculation: to become prime minister with the aid of the AfD and then to form a minority government of the so-called political centre. This insane strategy could only have been successful in case of a toleration by the AfD. Such a government would have been pushed ahead by the AfD permanently tightening up its demands. A minority government formed by the bourgeois parties CDU and FDP would have been the ideal constellation for such a scenario. [This article will be updated in the light of more recent events.]

It is this calculation that constitutes a break with a taboo. The scenario of the third round of the election was foreseeable as has been underlined by Angela Merkel therefore calling it 'inexcusable'. All attempts by FDP leader Lindner to present it in retrospect as an accident can only corroborate the suspicion that the FDP leadership is basically ready to include the AfD in their calculation. According to a recent public survey 62 per cent of the FDP electorate think that the political parties should decide on a case to case basis about a collaboration with the AfD. Thus they do not exclude principally any collaboration - unlike as yet the CDU.

On the one hand the CDU is confronted with the basic contradiction that parts of the AfD are flesh from its very own flesh and that the CDU, in view of its rapidly decreasing electorate, needs the extreme right to stay in power. On the other hand the CDU wants Germany to play the role of a world power. But this is not possible if they are backed up by the AfD. For unlike in the case of the conservatives of other countries the former allied powers of WW II or the European Union - without which Germany were but a political dwarf - do not forgive Germany a combination of right-wing extremism with world-power aspirations.

The lasting historical predicament of the German bourgeoisie is drastically symbolized by the strongly-worded protest of the International Auschwitz Committee the next day after the Thuringia election: The committee charges the democratic parties in the Thuringian parliament with political blindness and opportunism. According to the committee they have totally failed in their confrontation with the extreme right. The vice president of the committee, Heubner, argues: If the national leader of the FDP Lindner knew of Kemmerich's tactical considerations he should resign as the president of a liberal party. If Lindner did not participate in those considerations he should expel Kemmerich from the FDP for a behaviour detrimental to the party.

The CDU cannot ignore the committee's protest. Therefore the national leadership of the CDU confirmed its principal refusal of any cooperation with the AfD. But they will try to get out of this dilemma by increasingly adopting AfD slogans. They will carry on with tolerating the criminalization of left-wing protest by the police, the secret services and parts of the juridical system whereas the extreme right can act largely unhindered by political repression. Thereby they will make the AfD even stronger and more acceptable. On a local level the taboo is constantly broken anyhow.

For their justification, the FDP and the extreme right-wing Werteunion within the CDU present the so-called horseshoe theory: They say that it was their supposed aim to prevent extremists of both left and right to succeed. This ideology of 'totalitarianism' that puts an equals sign between the defenders of human, civil, and social rights and those who want to abolish them lies at the root of the political construction of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is a part of the problem and merely paves the way for the extreme right, which is demonstrated clearly by the recent events in Thuringia.

This has to stop! The Thuringian taboo break might have a positive aspect if we get a new debate about the fundamental consensus in our society. This consensus must unequivocally be based on anti-fascism and ecological sustainability.

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The Thuringian 'coup' has failed because of spontaneous nation-wide and international protests. Let us continue this kind of vigilance!

7 February 2020

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