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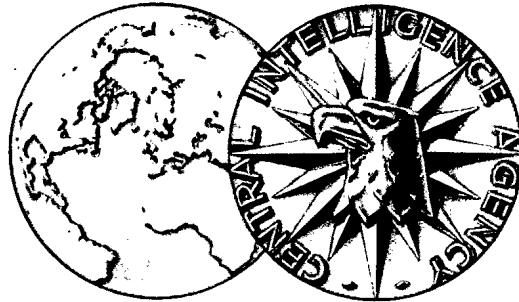
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PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FORTHCOMING WEST GERMAN ELECTIONS

G/S. I.



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PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FORTHCOMING WEST GERMAN ELECTIONS*

SUMMARY

Election conditions preceding the 14 August elections in Western Germany generally favor the larger, established political parties, which will profit from: (a) broader organization, (b) superior capabilities for party propaganda, (c) ability to present well-known candidates, (d) a substantial record of governmental achievement, and (e) certain provisions of the electoral law which handicap smaller parties.

The latter, including the German Communist Party (KPD), are, however, unhampered by the restrictions of responsibility, and can make extravagant campaign promises to all interests. They will attempt to exploit fully the dissatisfaction voiced in many quarters with the parties which are now in power. They will also, except for the KPD, gain votes as a result of the rightist political trend in Western Germany today.

It is estimated that the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and the KPD will retain approximately their past electoral strengths. The Christian Democratic Union and Christian Social Union alliance (CDU/CSU), however, may lose the votes of the rightist elements which supported it in earlier elections, in which case the smaller, rightist parties will be virtually the sole beneficiaries. The CDU/CSU alliance and the SPD are expected to win together at least 60 percent of the votes, and because of the provisions of the

electoral law, an even higher percentage of the seats in the Federal Diet (*Bundestag*).¹

In view of the probable election outcome, in which no party will win a majority, one of two possible coalition governments is expected to result. The first would probably be composed of the CDU/CSU, SPD, and possibly the FDP; the second of the CDU/CSU, the FDP, the Zentrum, and some of the smaller rightist parties. Despite the differences between the two major parties and the aversion of the SPD leadership to assuming responsibility without a majority of its own, a CDU/CSU-SPD government is the more likely of the two. The formation of such a coalition, however, will depend upon the ability of the SPD to obtain the cabinet posts necessary to ensure at least a partial realization of its program, and upon its willingness to subordinate partisan political considerations to the creation of a stable German government.

Of the two coalitions, a CDU/CSU-SPD coalition would be the more favorable to US interests because of its control of the Federal Diet, its greater stability, its more progressive composition, and its firmness toward the Communists. The alternative coalition would be far less favorable to US interests because it: (a) would be less stable, (b) would face far more powerful parliamentary opposition, (c) would be of a more rightist complexion—thus evoking the opposition of organized labor—and (d) would be more likely to seek the reunification of Germany with Soviet support.

¹ The lower house.

* It is assumed that there will be no fundamental changes in the present situation in Germany prior to these elections. A Reference Outline of Political Parties in Western Germany is attached as Appendix.

Note: The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, Navy, and the Air Force have concurred in this report. It is based on information available to CIA as of 1 July 1949.

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PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FORTHCOMING WEST GERMAN ELECTIONS

1. The Pre-Election Situation.

a. *The Established Major Parties.*

In the first federal elections under the Bonn Constitution which are scheduled for 14 August 1949, the established major parties, the Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union alliance (CDU/CSU), the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), and the Free Democratic Party (FDP), have several distinct advantages over the smaller independent parties. These three major parties operate on a trizonal basis and have fairly dependable party presses. The SPD is the most highly centralized, almost all authority being vested in a central executive committee dominated by Kurt Schumacher. The CDU/CSU and the FDP have both formed working committees to coordinate the policies of their *Land* organizations on a trizonal basis, but in both parties final authority has been retained by the *Land* party machine. The smaller independent parties, with the exception of the German Communist Party (KPD), have only a rudimentary organization and press, and are active in most instances only on a regional, or at most, a state (*Land*) level. None, except for the KPD, is organized on a zonal or trizonal basis. Some of the smaller parties, such as the Bavarian Party and the South Schleswig Association (SSV) are purely regional, with programs comprising both rightist and separatist aims. Others, among which are the German Bloc (DB) in Bavaria, the National Democratic Party (NDP) in Hesse, and the German Party (DP) in the British Zone, are rightist and nationalist, but have been unable to qualify for Military Government license in all states.

The major parties will also benefit from the electoral law, which provides that any party failing to win at least 5 percent of the state vote, or else the majority of the votes in one constituency, cannot be given seats in the Federal Diet (*Bundestag*). Most small parties would be unlikely to win the majority vote in any constituency. Their only hope

for representation, therefore, is to achieve the necessary 5 percent of the state vote and thus participate in the state party list system, whereby the percentage of the total vote in a state won by each party determines the number of Diet seats it receives. Of the seats in the Diet, 60 percent are allotted to candidates from the individual constituencies, so that only 40 percent are available through the state list system. The major parties have the further advantage of well-known political leaders, and, especially in the case of the CDU/CSU, a fair record of achievement in municipal, regional, state, and bizonal government. Excepting a few of the major KPD personalities, the smaller parties have relatively unknown leadership. They have also no recent experience in actual government.

b. *The Independent Minority Parties.*

During the coming federal election campaign, however, some factors will favor the independent over the established parties, particularly those of the latter that have held office. Independent party leaders will be able to exploit the considerable dissatisfaction felt toward the established parties by many social groups, most important of which are the eight million expellees from the east. Because these leaders are unlikely to assume actual responsibility, they will promise everything to all interests. They will make increased use of the label of "collaborators" with the Occupying Powers to embarrass the major parties. Their rightist-nationalist attitude should attract the votes of the many Germans who have hitherto been apathetic to politics and to the activities of the established parties.

2. Probable Results of the Elections.

a. *Estimated Election Returns.*

In the 1946 State Diet (*Landtag*) elections, the approximate percentages of the total votes in west Germany won by each party were as follows: CDU/CSU—36.5 percent; SPD—35.9 percent; FDP—10.3 percent; KPD—9.5 percent; and other parties—7.8 percent. The 1947-48 district (*Kreis*) and municipal (*Ge-*

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meinde) elections, however, saw changes in the relative party strengths, generally at the expense of the parties holding office. The approximate relative party strengths in these elections were CDU/CSU—34 percent; SPD—34 percent; FDP—9.5 percent; KPD—9 percent; and for small parties and independent candidates—13.5 percent. In several special district and municipal elections since 1947-48, minor conservative party candidates and independents have gained an increasing proportion of the votes. It cannot be assumed, however, that they would do as well in national elections where their lack of party organization would be an important handicap.

STATE DIET (*Landtag*) ELECTION
RESULTS 1946-47

(Percentage of valid votes cast)	
CDU/CSU	36.5%
SPD	35.9%
FDP	10.3%
KPD	9.5%
Zentrum	} 7.8%
German Party (DP)	
Economic Reconstruction Party (WAV)	
Other Parties	
Total	100.0%

ESTIMATED FEDERAL DIET (*Bundestag*)
ELECTION RESULTS, 1949

(Percentage of valid votes cast)	
CDU/CSU	25-35%
SPD	34-35%
FDP	8-10%
KPD	5- 8%
Zentrum	} 15-25%
German Party (DP)	
Bavarian Party	
South Schleswig Association (SSV)	
Economic Reconstruction Party (WAV)	
Independents and other parties	} 100.0%
Total	

On the basis of these trends, following the State Diet elections of 1946 and the district and municipal elections of 1947-48, the 1949 federal election results are estimated as follows. Of the 30 million Western Germans

eligible to vote, somewhat over 20 million will cast ballots. No party will win a majority. The SPD is expected to win between 34 and 35 percent of all votes, the FDP between 8 and 10 percent. The KPD is unlikely to win more than 8 percent of the votes, and because anti-Communist feeling in Western Germany has grown as a result of Soviet tactics in Berlin, it will probably win only 5 to 6 percent of the votes. These parties, therefore, will approximately retain their past electoral strengths.

The election results are most uncertain in the case of the CDU/CSU and the rightist parties, primarily because the rightist groups may win the votes of conservative elements that have hitherto given their support to the CDU/CSU. The CDU/CSU should win at least 25 percent of the vote, but may receive as high as 35 percent. The minor rightist and regional parties should win a minimum of 15 percent. They may gain as much as 25 percent, however, mostly at the expense of the CDU/CSU.

The proportion of west German voters actually opposed to the establishment of the western German Federal Republic is believed to be small and will be revealed primarily by the number of invalid ballots cast and the votes received by parties of the extreme left and right. A high percentage of abstentions would also indicate disapproval.

Because of the electoral law provisions previously noted, the percentage of votes estimated for each party does not constitute an estimate of that party's probable representation in the Federal Diet. Candidates elected by majority vote in individual constituencies will in most instances be those of the two major parties. Some of the smaller parties will not be able to gain either a single constituency or 5 percent of the state vote, and so will be barred entirely from representation in the Federal Diet. As a consequence, the strength of the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP in the Diet should actually be larger than their share in the vote might indicate. For example, it is entirely possible that the CDU/CSU and SPD together, while receiving only 60 percent of the total popular vote, might receive 80 percent of the total Diet seats, depending wholly on the distribution of the

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votes they receive. As a further example, the KPD may suffer loss under the electoral law in such states as Bavaria and Schleswig-Holstein, where its electoral strength has rarely exceeded 5 percent.

b. Estimated Composition of the Government.

As a result of the probable outcome of the elections, the government is expected to take the form of a coalition because neither the CDU/CSU nor the SPD is likely to assume exclusive responsibility. This coalition will probably take one of the following two forms:

(1) *CDU/CSU Coalition with the SPD.* In view of the preponderant representation these two parties will have in the Federal Diet, this is the more likely coalition. Factors against its formation, however, are the fundamental differences in the economic and social programs of the two parties and the aversion of SPD leaders to assumption of governmental responsibility when the party does not have its own working majority.

The final decision of the SPD is likely to be based on two factors: first, its ability to obtain enough cabinet posts to ensure at least a partial realization of its program; and second, its willingness to subordinate partisan politics to the attainment of a stable government.

The stability of the coalition would be improved by the participation of the FDP which often takes a position midway between the two larger parties. Although the attitude the FDP would assume toward this coalition is uncertain, it would probably participate if given adequate compensation in the appointments to executive positions.

(2) *CDU/CSU Coalition with the FDP, Zentrum, and possibly Certain Small Rightist Groups.* Although such a coalition is possible, it would be faced with the unwillingness of the more liberal elements to associate with the representatives of the extreme right, the regional and religious antagonisms between its component groups, and the problem of distributing executive positions to satisfy the ambitions of all the partners.

3. The New Government in Relation to US Interests.

a. CDU/CSU Coalition with the SPD.

A CDU/CSU-SPD coalition, with or without FDP participation, would be broadly representative, and would be favorable to US interests. The two parties, through their control of the majority of the seats in the Federal Diet, would be certain of passing all mutually acceptable legislation, and to this extent could provide effective government. Moreover, the presence of the SPD would counteract the rightist wing of the CDU/CSU, provide a progressive force within the coalition, assure the support of most trade unions and the bulk of the working class, and render remote the possibility of a west German "deal" with an east German Communist state or directly with the USSR.

b. CDU/CSU Coalition with the FDP, Zentrum, and possibly Certain Small Rightist Groups.

Such a government would present several features at variance with US interests. Its capability for effective and stable government would be sharply reduced by the opposition of the SPD, often coinciding with that of other opposition parties and factions. Labor support, both union and otherwise, would be largely lacking, and in many instances labor would offer strong resistance to governmental policies. Its stability might be further impaired by the undependability of the splinter groups forming the right wing of the coalition. In addition, the reactionary wing of the CDU/CSU would gain in influence as a result of the party's collaboration with these conservative small parties and the government would thus become increasingly rightist and nationalistic in character. Certain elements in the CDU/CSU have already sought to establish closer relations with politicians in the Soviet Zone and would continue to explore the possibilities of reuniting their country, with Soviet support.

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APPENDIX

REFERENCE OUTLINE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN WESTERN GERMANY

1. Rightist.¹

German Party (DP). Active only in the British Zone, with its main strength in lower Saxony, where it received 17.9 percent of the votes in the 1947-48 elections. The DP will probably be supported by former members of the nationalistic German Rightist Party (DRP). The latter party existed only in certain districts of the British Zone, where it enjoyed considerable success until the recent prohibition of its activities by the British Military Government.

South Schleswig Association (SSV). Active only in Schleswig-Holstein in the British Zone, where it won 9.3 percent of the votes in the 1947-48 elections. The SSV is a separatist and rightist party, given mild encouragement by the Danish Government.

National Democratic Party (NDP). Active only in certain electoral districts of Hesse, in the US Zone. The NDP is a new organization which has won surprising successes in by-elections during 1948-49. Not yet licensed on a state (*Land*) level, it is reported to have concluded a working agreement with the Hesse FDP, whereby some of its candidates will stand on the FDP list.

Bavarian Party. Active only in Bavaria in the US Zone, where it received 9.3 percent of the votes in the 1947-48 elections. A rightist and separatist group, it is expected to win 25-30 percent of the votes in Bavaria, since its popularity has been increasing steadily.

¹This does not purport to be a complete list of the rightist parties, which are still in flux. The parties listed are those which have been most active recently. At present, the political activities of all rightist parties are limited by military government licensing. Their programs, therefore, are likely to be implicit rather than announced, and their rightist character is presently indicated more by their supporting elements than by their party platforms. In general, however, they tend to be authoritarian in principle and chauvinistic in attitude, either on a regional or national basis.

Economic Reconstruction Party (WAV). Although it gained only 2 percent of the votes in the 1947-48 elections, the WAV, active only in Bavaria, does have some representation in the Bavarian Diet. Despite the crowds which go to enjoy the speeches of its demagogic leader, Alfred Loritz, the WAV will probably win even fewer of the votes in the federal elections than it did in 1947-48.

2. Center.

Christian Democratic Union (CDU)/Christian Social Union (CSU).

Licensed in all states of all three zones, the CDU/CSU is a loose amalgam of state organizations coordinated through a working committee on the western German level. Its membership is heterogeneous, ranging from moderate liberal to extreme right, but in general, the CDU/CSU can be characterized as a middle class party subject to strong Catholic clerical influence in the south and Lutheran in the northwest. On the economic side, the CDU/CSU stands as the chief protagonist of free enterprise. The CDU/CSU represents moderate federalism, as concerns the central government.

Free Democratic Party (FDP). Licensed in all states of all three zones, the FDP is a working union of various state parties which generally subscribe to a common program. The FDP supports the free enterprise system and parliamentary democracy, but is more centralistic than the CDU/CSU and is not subject to clerical influence.

Center Party (Zentrum). Active only in the British Zone, where it registered gains in the 1947-48 elections, the Center is a purely Catholic party, in contrast to the CDU/CSU, which enjoys some Protestant support. The party endeavors to attract labor support by a more progressive social program than that of the CDU/CSU. The Center has been under continual pressure to join with the CDU/CSU,

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and such a union remains possible in the future.

3. Leftist.

Social Democratic Party (SPD). Licensed in all states and all zones of Western Germany, the SPD is very tightly organized. It is very similar in aims to the British Labor Party, with which it has close relations. It advocates parliamentary democracy, the socialization of all basic industries, a strong central government, and bitter resistance to Communism. The SPD is supported by the trade unions and the great majority of west German labor.

German Communist Party (KPD). Licensed in all states and zones, the KPD program is an amalgamation of the usual Communist objectives and, for tactical reasons, a strong nationalist stand against the western occupation powers. The KPD is closely supported by the Communist Socialist Unity Party (SED) in the Soviet Zone, though formally separated from it. KPD strength, never more than 10 percent of the votes cast in previous elections, is believed to have been reduced appreciably during the past year because of Soviet tactics in Berlin and Eastern Germany.

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