

The resignation of AKK

The recent resignation of the Leader of the CDU in Germany, AKK, received little attention in the UK media compared say to the daily stories about the Democrat opposition in the USA. We should consider why the lead party in the German governing coalition has just lost its new Leader, who was meant to be taking over from Mrs Merkel as Chancellor candidate or as Chancellor before the next election. Germany is an important country and economy, and her current troubles will have an impact on our economy just as US politics has an impact on it.

The tribulations of AKK got worse late last October with the Thuringia State election. We are told far more about the Democrat caucus in Iowa than such Lander elections in Germany. In that election Mrs Merkel's CDU party fell to third place with just 21.7% of the vote, losing 13 of its 34 seats in the Parliament. The AFD came second with 23.4% of the vote, adding 11 seats to its existing 11. Its leader is a very contentious figure with views about Germany's past that all mainstream parties find unacceptable. Mrs Merkel's main coalition partner, the SPD (Social Democrats) sank to just 8.2% of the vote, losing 4 of their 12 seats. Die Linke, the left wing challenger party stayed top with 31% and 29 seats.

In this state election the combined forces of CDU and SPD (Traditional centre right and centre left dominant parties, Conservative and Labour in UK terms) polled just 29.9% of the vote. Two radical parties of left and right polled 54.4% between them. In the hung Parliament created in a recent vote CDU members helped the AFD throw out the Die Linke left radical Minister President and replace him with the Leader of the Free Democrats who got just 5% of the vote. This broke the Merkel rule that CDU members should not support the AFD, and led AKK to take the hit and resign, for the bad result and above all for the voting decision taken in the new Thuringia Parliament. Public protest soon led to the resignation of the new Minister President. The Parliament is currently unwilling to hold new elections which Mrs Merkel and some others want and has yet to appoint a new Minister President.

This tells us there is great unhappiness in Germany about current policy and the stance of the present government. It means there is a lack of leadership in the CDU who have been leading government for much of the time in recent years. Mrs Merkel clings to her pro EU green strategy, offering no support to her struggling car industry. The economy has plunged from good performance to little or no growth interspersed with the odd negative quarter. There is a big argument going on about how to spend the surplus on the budget within the coalition, with some CDU hawks still unhappy about the whole idea of fiscal deflation.

It is still not clear what will happen about who should govern Thuringia. Many Germans are alarmed at what has happened there.