

Hungarian fascists win over 20 percent of the vote

Markus Salzmann
8 April 2014

The right-wing party Fidesz of Prime Minister Victor Orban won the Hungarian parliamentary elections on Sunday. The real winner, however, is the neo-fascist party Jobbik. It won more than 20 percent of the vote, four points more than in 2010. This is the best result for an extreme-right party in national parliamentary elections in Europe.

Fidesz, which contested the election in alliance with the small ultra-conservative KDNP, won 44.7 percent of the vote, 8.5 percent less than four years ago. The opposition alliance led by the Socialist Party (MSZP) added 7 percent to its total, reaching 26 percent, but considering that almost the entire spectrum of opposition parties was united in this alliance, the result is a slap in the face.

The Greens (LMP), with 5.2 percent, were able to enter parliament by a hair's breadth. Turnout was 61.2 percent, making it the second lowest since the fall of the Stalinists.

Whether Premier Orban can rule with a two-thirds majority will be decided in the next few days, after all the votes are counted. According to the preliminary results, Fidesz would have the necessary 133 seats exactly.

The election victory of Fidesz is above all the result of the complete absence of an opposition that speaks for the interests of the working class.

The social democratic tripartite alliance of the MSZP, the Democratic Party (DK) and the Together Platform 2014 is deeply divided, and had come about only shortly before the election. Together, they won about as many votes as the MSZP and their former partners did at the time of their historic defeat four years ago.

The DK and the Together Platform 2014 are led respectively by Ferenc Gyurcsány and Gordon Bajnai, two former prime ministers, who implemented radical

austerity measures and unreservedly accepted the dictates from Brussels. The MSZP is the successor to the Stalinist state party, and is now run by a young careerist, Attila Mesterházy. Both the Liberal Party and a section of the Greens, who joined the alliance, supported this policy.

Immediately before the elections, Bajnai confirmed once again that a “socialist” government would continue this right-wing programme. He said the elections represented a crossroads—whether Hungary “became a peaceful European country” or drifted further eastwards. Both Mesterházy and Gyurcsány support Hungary moving closer to the European Union (EU).

However, the majority of Hungarians reject the EU. It is regarded as the source of the austerity dictates responsible for the social decline of broad sections of the population.

Orban conducted a right-wing populist election campaign, in which he railed against the EU and the power of the banks, and extolled a Greater Hungary. A vote for the opposition alliance, he said, would mean a return to economic chaos and a sell-out to international capital. Brussels would thus hold even greater sway. He also called for the reduction of energy prices and taxes.

On the eve of the election, however, he then promised that Hungary would remain faithful to the EU, whose funds it needed urgently. For its part, the EU has, despite occasional formal criticism of its authoritarian methods of rule, long since come to terms with the Orban regime.

Despite the impotence of the social democratic opposition, Fidesz suffered heavy losses. The party lost 800,000 votes compared to the last election. It will probably achieve a two-thirds majority only because Orban changed the electoral law in the last four years

completely to his own benefit.

The number of parliamentary seats was halved, and the constituency boundaries entirely redrawn so that Fidesz usually has a majority. For example, the mining town of Ajka, a traditionally left-wing stronghold, was merged with two surrounding rural constituencies in which the left-wing majority was then dissipated. Ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries, whom Orban supplied with Hungarian passports, were allowed to vote by post; 95 percent of them then voted for Fidesz. On the other hand, Hungarian students in other European countries, who tend to reject Orban, had to personally go to the embassy and queue for a long time to take part in the election.

Under the new electoral law, of the 199 parliamentary seats, 106 are allocated according to a majority vote; the constituency candidate with the most votes is elected. In this way, Fidesz won 96 directly elected seats, while it only won 37 of the 93 seats awarded by proportional representation.

In the media, too, the opposition has been discriminated against. Privately owned stations were banned from broadcasting election advertising, while on the state-owned broadcasters, only Orban could be seen most of the time.

During his time in office, Orban introduced more than 800 new laws creating authoritarian state structures, undermining freedom of the press, introducing forced labour for the unemployed and enforcing massive tax increases and austerity measures. Poverty in Hungary is at an unprecedented high. Hunger, homelessness and social impoverishment among wide layers are ubiquitous in this EU member state.

The absence of any serious opposition meant that Jobbik could especially benefit from the discontent in the country. It is considered to be one of the most extreme right-wing parties in Europe, having paramilitary forces, and representing openly anti-Semitic views. In recent years, it has made headlines, especially for its attacks on Roma.

During the election campaign, Jobbik opposed the EU. Party leader Gabor Vona promised, among other things, more jobs, a harder line against criminals, and a referendum on EU membership. He offered himself as an alternative for those who feel abandoned by all Hungarian governments since the introduction of

capitalism a quarter of a century ago.

On this basis, Vona was able to win support mainly in the impoverished northeast. But even among students, Jobbik is the strongest party.

Orban has repeatedly collaborated with and supported Jobbik. For example, Jobbik has introduced numerous pieces of legislation that were then adopted jointly with Fidesz. High-ranking Fidesz representatives are regular participants at meetings of Jobbik. The fact that Jobbik can carry out its nationalist and anti-Semitic provocations and its campaigns against Roma unmolested is also attributable to the government.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact