

## Hamburg SPD Congress Compromises, But Continues Nuclear Energy Drive

The 1977 West German Social Democratic party (SPD) congress in Hamburg, West Germany, passed a major compromise resolution on energy Nov. 17 giving priority to the country's abundant coal deposits, but at the same time allowing Chancellor Helmut Schmidt a free hand in implementing his program for expanded nuclear energy development.

### WEST GERMANY

The compromise, which was passed after a day-long debate, formally linked nuclear power plant construction and the resumption of construction at the nuclear power sites currently closed by environmentalist court suits, to approval of temporary and permanent nuclear fuel waste dumps. However, the resolution allows nuclear plant construction without prior approval for the waste dumps in "special cases," giving Chancellor Schmidt a clause elastic enough for his energy program of 30,000 new megawatts of energy, mostly nuclear energy, in the next decade.

On Nov. 21, the Schmidt government showed that it will fully exploit the opportunities provided by implementing this compromise when the official Nuclear Research Office in Karlsruhe approved one temporary waste dump at Arhaus, near the Dutch border, and indicated that other waste dump approvals were on the way.

The compromise resolution itself was carefully designed to avoid a split at the Congress between the pronuclear energy working-class base of the SPD, and its environmentalist left wing, which is protected by SPD chairman Willy Brandt, the City of London financiers' top agent-of-influence in West Germany.

The original environmentalist strategy for the congress was to provoke a split by having a resolution for a moratorium on nuclear construction — previously passed by the Brandt-dominated SPD executive committee — presented to the congress. However on Nov. 10, approximately 70,000 SPD trade union members from the Mine and Energy, Metalworkers, Chemical, and Public Service unions demonstrated in the city of Dortmund for nuclear energy and against environmentalism, destroying the SPD environmentalists' claim that environmentalism represented the ideas of the party majority.

By Nov. 13, both Schmidt and SPD parliamentary faction leader Herbert Wehner convened an extraordinary party commission to rewrite the original committee resolution for a moratorium, an unprecedented change in party rules. The commission, which included both environmentalists like Erhard Eppler, and officials from the Mine and Energy Union, worked out the energy

compromise that replaced the call for a moratorium on nuclear construction.

The uneasy truce between the party base and the left wing around Brandt also held in the keynote addresses given by Brandt, Schmidt and Wehner on Nov. 16. Although the congress delegates held their breath as Brandt began to speak, wondering if he would openly attack the Chancellor over the energy compromise, Brandt instead promised that "the party will not tolerate attempts to paralyze the Chancellor. I will defend the Chancellor's ability to act." In turn, Schmidt did not attack the left wing at all, and instead defended it from "German McCarthyism," before he detailed his reasons for supporting nuclear energy. "Being competitive in the world markets is key for the Federal Republic," Schmidt said. "This means the highest technologies, and because of our high wages, we have no choice but to offer the best technologies... without nuclear energy, the Federal Republic is out of business."

Wehner devoted his entire speech to an attack on the 16 left SPD parliamentarians who voted against a bill that would limit information networks between terrorists and their lawyers. He warned the SPD that such actions could cost them control of the government, and topple Chancellor Schmidt.

Once the energy compromise was passed, the left SPD went through the motions of accepting the will of the party majority. Eppler even tried to defend it in front of zealous ecologists, saying: "There was a strong tendency towards fission, but we were successful in keeping the opposite option open. At least fission power plant construction will be slower with this."

But on the same day that the left wing was allegedly accepting the compromise, Ralf Dahrendorf, the Director of the London School of Economics and a leader of West Germany's tiny Free Democratic Party, outlined in the weekly *Die Zeit* the British plan to attack the SPD and the opposition Christian Democrats with an avowedly fascist fourth party on the right, and an equally fascist radical-environmentalist "green" fifth party on the "left."

Dahrendorf correctly reported on the pronuclear sentiment at the congress: "If Jimmy Carter had gone to the SPD Hamburg congress as a guest... he would have been considered a left-wing man." Dahrendorf went on to attack the consensus for progress and nuclear energy in the SPD, Free Democrats, and opposition Christian Democrats (CDU): "the consensus is a timebomb in effect because the political establishment lacks new ideas... other parties will emerge, the fourth may emerge... this option may go in the wrong direction and destroy the postwar Christian parties... A fifth party also exists, which is made up of all those who form around the issues of justice and injustice. This is only the tip of the iceberg."

On Nov. 18, the last day of the congress, the whole compromise package began to disintegrate during the elections to the new party executive committee. The compromise between Schmidt, Wehner and the left wing around Brandt had been that Wehner would get the most votes, Brandt would closely follow him and Schmidt would trail Brandt, but would still get above the 400 vote level. The left tried to extract its revenge by giving Wehner 414 votes, Brandt 413, and only 395 votes to Schmidt.

This attempt by the left to begin the attack on the SPD that Dahrendorf predicted created its own backlash. According to the daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* Nov. 19, the SPD working class base viewed the low vote for Schmidt "as an act of war." Brandt was subjected to so much party pressure as a result of the insult to Schmidt that he

tried to trivialize it by calling it an "unforeseen error."

The executive committee vote also convinced Chancellor Schmidt's political opponents in the CDU, which recently officially gave full party support to nuclear energy, that the only way to keep the government's nuclear program protected from similar left SPD sabotage is to increase the pressure on Schmidt. Gerhard Stoltenberg, the CDU governor of the state of Schleswig-Holstein and a spokesman for the CDU industrialists faction, was interviewed in Schmidt's hometown paper, the *Bergedorfer Zeitung*, on Nov. 21. Stoltenberg said that the Hamburg compromises "were all fine in public but we will not fool ourselves over that congress. There were only thin bridges built over otherwise sharp internal controversies, and we can foresee hard fights in Bonn on the issues."

## French Industry Budget Calls For Expansion Of Atomic Power Capacity

The French National Assembly last week voted up a 1978 budget for French state industry which contains provisions for the establishment of a system of nuclear power stations throughout the country, the target of which is 40 gigawatts (40 billion watts) of nuclear elec-

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### FRANCE

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tricity-generation capacity by 1985. This program is by far the most ambitious in Western Europe to date, and complements the French commitment to develop the fast-breeder reactor, and fusion power in the long term, to meet increasing energy needs.

In presenting the budget, Minister of Industry René Monory promised the National Assembly that the construction of nuclear plants would not be limited to the Rhône Valley in France's southeast, where these plants are now concentrated. Instead, construction plans would include at least three plants in the Paris region, to cope with the increasing needs of the nation's capital, and

more facilities in the Loire Valley and Brittany region. This is precisely the program long put forward by the state-controlled electricity company, Electricité de France (EDF), which is already actively looking for sites around Paris for the three plants.

Monory emphasized the safety of the program, stating, "The question of the recuperation of radioactive waste has been solved. There is no investment in the world in energy safety as important as what we have made for nuclear power. We have acquired an almost perfect and total mastery" of the technologies required.

The Minister of Industry added that his government has given priority to the development of fast-breeder nuclear plants, which can reduce growing dependency on limited uranium supplies by using plutonium as fuel. The government's decision to give the Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) 34 percent control (a blocking minority) of the newly created company Novatome confirmed this. Novatome's sole responsibility will be the construction of the huge fast-breeder plant known as the Super-Phenix, and the future commercialization of the breeder.