

Report from Bonn by George Gregory and Rainer Apel

Electoral setback for Schmidt

Germany's Chancellor lost his first "test of strength," but can easily regroup if his supporters clarify the issues.

Returning from a round of brief consultations in London, West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt told newsmen in Bonn March 22 the message he had just delivered to British Prime Minister Margeret Thatcher: there was one issue above all others, Schmidt insisted, which European leaders had to face. That was "the greatest chaos in the world economy since 1945." Schmidt then warned, "A depression in the style of the 1930s is probably on our doorstep right now. This has to be fought."

Schmidt communicated these thoughts 24 hours after his Social Democratic Party (SPD) had suffered a dramatic electoral loss in the northern state of Lower Saxony. For the first time in over a decade, SPD returns had dipped below 40 percent in a northern industrial state.

The victor in the election, moreover, had been the international zero-growth organization, the Club of Rome. The Club has cultivated two party currents in the state through the Volkswagen Foundation circuit which financed the Club of Rome's founding.

Christian Democratic incumbent Ernst Albrecht, a protégé of the zero-growth Club, came off with more than 50 percent, giving him an absolute majority in the state parliament; and the Green Party, a fascist-environmentalist party, topped the 5 percent requirement for parliamentary representation, giving them now a total of 11 seats.

How could voters so strongly

desert Schmidt's party, when the Chancellor has made stemming world depression his chief policy objective, and give such support to forces who would readily dismantle Germany as an economic power, and implement a Morgenthau Plan-type program for ruralization if they had to power to do so?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Chairman of the European Labor Party, and one of Germany's most prominent proponents of nuclear-power development, answered this question in a written statement March 23. What the results documented, she stated, was that the Lower Saxony electorate had acted on the basis of "stupidity," a parochial ignorance of international developments quite similar to the "stupidity" which ushered Jimmy Carter into power in 1976 in the U.S.

In Lower Saxony, Albrecht and the Club of Rome took advantage of the large voter base among anti-communist Eastern refugees to whip up hysterical opposition to the left wing of the SPD. That left wing is controlled by Willy Brandt, the synthetic politician invented by Eleanor Dulles in West Berlin after World War II.

The Lower Saxony election was the first of four Schmidt faces this year, the most important being Hamburg, his home state, in April, and Hesse, a stronghold of Schmidt support, in the fall.

At stake in these coming months is whether one of the world's foremost statesmen, whose name has come to be identified with the concept of "peace through eco-

conomic development," will be allowed to bring to fruition a series of treaty agreements which have been the hallmark of his eight years in office. These treaties lay the basis for a substantial leap in East-West trade, and economic cooperation between advanced and developing countries.

The Lower Saxony election highlights the weakness of Schmidt's government. Although recognized as "the most popular Chancellor" of the Federal Republic's existence, Schmidt has been forced to govern in alliance with an array of political figures who do not share the Chancellor's outlook. Germany's political "careerists," who are to be found in every political party, are individuals bound by the postwar occupation mentality that Germany can never be a proud nation. These careerists, including a whole group of CDU Chancellor and federal cabinet hopefuls (Helmut Kohl, Albrecht, Manfred Woerner) have been working closely with the German Marshall Fund to paralyze Schmidt's government and drive him to defeat, possibly through early elections before year-end or in 1983. With Brandt counted in as an ally, these CDU'ers have held a dozen or so meetings in Washington in recent weeks to strike agreement with Washington officials on the policies the CDU would implement, especially on defense questions, were it to come to power.

Schmidt's base is to be found in industrial regions where trade union and industry groups representing every party have come together to realize Schmidt's outlook. What Lower Saxony shows is that this base must now move rapidly to educate a wider array of the population.