

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

A blow against the anti-nuclear lobby

Behind the decision to sweep aside the obstacles to nuclear power lies a new current of pro-technology optimism.

The German government's recent decisions to revive the country's stalled nuclear energy program and to expose the Soviet hand guiding the anti-nuclear protest movement, show the great potential that exists here for reversing two decades of anti-technology brainwashing by the zero-growthers.

This shift coincides with a growing recognition by the Kohl government that the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative is *a fait accompli*—and even an indispensable program to defend the Western alliance as a whole from the Soviet nuclear threat. Bonn has begun to drop its skepticism as a result of President Reagan's firm stand on the SDI since his re-election, plus numerous assurances by the President, U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, SDI Director Lt. Gen. James Abrahamson, and other officials that the United States was by no means withdrawing its defense umbrella from Western Europe—quite the contrary.

Now the prospect of a German contribution to the high-technology research needed for the SDI and the space exploration program is threatening to liberate the pro-technology mainstream in the country from the regime of environmentalism. The Jan. 16 decision by the Kohl government to join the U.S. Columbus space station project inspired German industrialists to think about developing new technologies rather than complaining about competition from the Japanese.

After the decision on space research, nuclear energy became the next test case, and on Feb. 4 a decision was

announced to put a stop to nearly 10 years of controversy and build a nuclear fuel-reprocessing facility at Wackersdorf, in eastern Bavaria near the border with Czechoslovakia. The plan had been approved by the Bonn cabinet in January, and now the German Society for Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing (DWK) announced construction plans. Preliminary work on the site will begin soon.

A previous plan to build a reprocessing and nuclear waste storage facility in Lower Saxony was stalled following violent anti-nuclear protests in the 1970s. Since the current construction site is on state-owned land and there are no private land-owners involved, there will be no possibility of sabotage of construction permits by the anti-nuclear lobby.

This reprocessing project will ensure the safe disposal of nuclear waste, so that the nuclear industry can continue to function. It will allow the nuclear industry to reprocess and reuse spent nuclear fuel, and will enable the country to enrich lower-grade or spent fuel, opening up new prospects for the development of nuclear fission technologies.

Another sign of the technological optimism emerging is a new interest in the media in the "laser technology revolution"—the use of lasers both for industrial and medical application.

But most crucial was the government's decision to finally open its files on the anti-nuclear movement and leak to the press details of the abundant evidence of the subversive role of East

bloc intelligence agencies against Western nuclear power development.

As the report of the interior ministry shows, the Soviet KGB and East German secret intelligence have spent millions of deutschemarks to support the West German anti-nuclear movement, to pay off journalists, to encourage political and scientific sabotage of nuclear power. These agencies also resorted to direct sabotage, the ministry's report reveals. East German agents, for example, were deployed to spread radioactive wastes around nuclear power plants, to foster the hoax of a threat from nuclear radiation.

If the Kohl government decides to go beyond the present leaks and publish more of its security dossiers on the anti-nuclear movement, there is every reason to expect a decisive turn against the "green" anti-nuclear sentiment in the whole country. A recent public opinion poll documented that about two-thirds of the West German population is basically in favor of nuclear energy development, while only 14% opposes it.

Growing opposition to the environmentalist Green Party has recently come from the trade union movement and from industrialists who are fed up with the Greens' blockage of their investments. When the Green Party of Frankfurt published its election program early in February, denouncing the Hoechst Chemical Corporation as a "killer industry" which should be dismantled for the greater good of Mother Nature, Hoechst countered the attack promptly: Management and the union shop stewards joined forces on Feb. 5 to file a lawsuit against the Greens.

In the past companies and unions alike have tried to "convince" the Greens by endless "dialogues" rather than hitting back.