

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### An unsavory alliance

*The Bonn austerity regime and neo-Nazi groups are joining hands against Patriots for Germany's anti-AIDS campaign.*

**T**he War on AIDS, which the Patriots for Germany launched in late 1985, is shaping post-election politics in Bonn. The politicians who rejoiced over the Nov. 4 defeat of California Proposition 64, which called for making AIDS a reportable disease, have come to realize that this call is gaining popularity now in Germany.

The Patriots—Germany's new political party headed by Helga Zepp-LaRouche—have worked as a political catalyst, forcing the Christian Social Union (CSU) of Franz Josef Strauss, the more conservative of the two Christian Democratic parties in the Bonn government, to call for regular mass testing and mandatory AIDS registration. In talks held by the three Bonn coalition parties on the new government's public health agenda, the CSU demanded that AIDS be made reportable. This was rejected by the two other coalition partners, the CDU and the liberal FDP, on fake "civil rights" grounds.

In the heated debate between the three parties, the CSU voiced deep dissent with the "safe sex" approach of CDU's minister of public health, Mrs. Rita Süßmuth. The CSU is no friend of the Patriots, but has made itself a channel for the critique of German Catholics against the "immorality" of Süßmuth's approach.

The CDU and the CSU know that the Catholics are a strong constituency whose concerns can't be swept under the rug. Four key state elections are coming up in 1987, and the Patriots for Germany have a moral impact on

these Catholic voters, many of whom are unwilling to vote CDU or CSU again. The Patriots have raised a second explosive issue, pointing to austerity policy as the source of the government's reluctance to combat AIDS.

The Bonn government realizes that it may not be able to contain concern about AIDS for much longer. This makes containing the influence of the Patriots *now* a prime issue on the government agenda.

Health Minister Süßmuth has begun a propaganda campaign, stating that calls for mandatory registration of AIDS victims should be rejected, since they "recall memories of the coercive system of the Nazis." This allegation brings Mrs. Süßmuth, a member of the CDU's liberal "Moscow Faction," close to all those Soviet-run leftists in West Germany, whose favorite libel against the Patriots has been that AIDS registration and quarantine means to put people in concentration camps.

This propaganda has not stopped the Patriots' growing political influence. Once confronted seriously with the Patriots' views, voters would not believe in these libels. Apparently, a "more effective" operation had to be launched against the Patriots.

Apart from its channels into the West German left, Moscow also has a hand among the right-extremists. Recently, a ranking official of the neo-Nazi NPD (National Democratic Party of Germany) was arrested for espionage for Warsaw Pact secret services.

Thus, it came as no surprise that

one of the right-extremist groups in Germany, the Republikaner party (REP), suddenly got interested in the AIDS issue in late 1986, and even copied the Patriots' campaign slogan "AIDS threatens us all."

The REP began a phony campaign for mandatory AIDS registration and quarantine, blaming the spread of the disease on foreigners, especially those from Third World countries. This created a welcome bogeyman for the Bonn government to point to: See, the call for registration comes from the right-wing extremists. Next, the NPD discovered its interest in the AIDS issue, developing a campaign similar to the REP profile.

Both parties focus their phony campaign on the same constituencies that are attracted by the Patriots: farmers, workers, shopowners, craftsmen, and non-liberal Catholics. Both REP and NPD try to present themselves to voters as "patriotic parties." And the two parties decided to spend several million deutschemarks to run in the May 17 state elections of Rhineland-Palatinate, where the Patriots are building a grassroots movement right now to run in the elections. Both parties are, however, *not* running in the April 5 early elections in the state of Hesse—where the Patriots did not put up a slate.

The purpose of this joint REP/NPD effort is obvious, namely to try to contain and distort the Patriots' impact. Both REP and NPD are well-supplied with funds, not least because the state's reimbursement for campaign outlays for the Jan. 25 elections has already been paid to them. How fast this is paid depends on the good will of the ruling parties in Bonn. Thus, the NPD received 1.3 million DM, and the REP 1.27 million DM, most of which will be "invested" in the Rhineland-Palatinate state elections.