

# Energy battle lines drawn in BRD

Compounding the pressure on West Germany's Schmidt government, which made nuclear energy a cornerstone of the European Monetary System, has been a virulent environmentalist eruption against nuclear power in the wake of the Harrisburg reactor crisis in the United States. Mobs of hippies and youthful environmentalists have demonstrated at the planned Gorleben nuclear waste dump, while leading mass circulation press organs, such as the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, ran headlines screaming, "Will the Harrisburg Reactor Explode?"

But the environmentalist outbreak against nuclear energy may be the stimulus that shocks the BRD out of its lethargy. While many of Germany's younger generation have been gulled by the antinuclear propaganda, energy austerity, such as that being proposed by Energy Secretary James Schlesinger for the United States, is no trivial matter here. Most of the adult population vividly remembers Hitler's forced labor from the Labor Service (Arbeitsdienst), austerity wages for coal miners, and concentration camp slave labor worked to death in coal gasification factories.

German advocates of nuclear energy are beginning to draw the battle lines around precisely this issue. Hans Mundorff, chief editor of the financial daily *Handelsblatt* explained the connection in his editorial "Nevertheless: Nuclear Energy" April 3. "One could, for example, dictate zero growth. That policy, however, could not remain limited to GNP, but would also have to be applied to the reproduction of mankind, which also occurs in geometrical progression. Do you want that? Do you want the gigantic bureaucracy which is solely responsible for controlling every form of growth, totally by itself and in policy-state style? Such a bureaucracy which would obviously have to be a supranational one, could not be established without war. . . . one could also increase German coal production to 200 million tons per year, which would of course presuppose slave labor for workers, the Labor Service."

The argument of the *Handelsblatt* editorial is being echoed by both West German government nuclear oversight agencies, and by the energy spokesman for the opposition Christian Democratic Union party, Dr. Karl-Heinz Narjes.

The Reactor Security Commission, which briefed the Cabinet on April 4, issued a release labeling the turning off of the Three-Mile Island cooling system by hand "a friendly-like human denial" of the automatic cooling system. It stated that without this direct intervention, things would have been better inside the reactor.

Narjes tackled the whole debate about nuclear safety head on in a release April 3, calling for unhampered continuation of nuclear construction in West Germany. The release stated that human intervention could not occur in West German reactors, which have enough automatic safety systems to make bungling human interference impossible.

And several daily newspapers, which were among the first to print scare stories about Three-Mile Island, and which enthusiastically covered a 40,000 antinuclear demonstration at the site for the Gorleben nuclear waste dump March 31, are now backing nuclear energy.

The April 3 *Bildzeitung*, the largest circulation daily in the country, ran a large article on page two headlined, "Without Nuclear Energy, It Doesn't Work: No Wind, Solar, Oil or Coal Energy can fit." The article detailed how rejecting nuclear energy in the BRD would mean "labor intensive jobs in coal" and 150,000 more coal miners to fill the demand for energy. "We will have to live with nuclear energy in the future — there isn't any substitute visible," the paper concluded.

Another daily, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote on April 3 that it was the "human failure" that caused the accident at the Three-Mile Plant, not the nuclear plant itself. The *Zeitung* also moved to quash hysteria about radioactive contamination around the plant by reminding its readers that the plant had only been operating for three months, not long enough to generate significant amounts of radiation. Using an argument similar to the Reactor Security Commission, the *Zeitung* argued that the incident would not have been so significant if the cooling system had not been cut off.

## Gorleben

The environmentalist demonstrations around the site of the planned Gorleben nuclear waste dump in Lower Saxony, which reached a peak March 31 as news about Harrisburg spread throughout the BRD, give a good idea of just who is controlling and financing the well-organized environmentalists' campaign.

For the last year or so, ever since the Federal Government has let it be known that the deep salt deposits under the farming village of Gorleben made that site the prime candidate for the dump, environmentalists, hippies, college dropouts, and a significant number of the same counterculture layers who support terrorism have been camping out around Gorleben in so

called "ecological villages." Their headquarters has been the basement of the country estate owned by Count Brockdorff, a leading environmentalist in his own right, who just happens to be the major landowner in the Gorleben area. When the considerable money and material aid that the Count has given the environmentalists has not been enough to help them get publicity, the Count uses his contacts in the Lutheran Church to gain further sympathy for their cause, for the Count is also one of the leading lay Protestants in West Germany.

It was not accident, then, that on March 31 seven special trains from nearby North German cities, 340 special buses and several columns of protestors rallied at Gorleben "Against a second Harrisburg." The medieval count, backward peasants, and proterrorist counterculture groups all joined forces against nuclear energy. Most of these dupes thought they were really rallying to spare the world a nuclear holocaust, but one of the CDU politicians who has been tailing the antinuclear movement, Richard von Weizsäcker, let the cat out of the bag in a statement to the April 2 *Zeitung*. Weizsäcker insisted he was against the Gorleben dump because "in a couple hundred years, after the third and fourth world war, no one will know any more that such dangerous material is deeply buried there, and this could have catastrophic consequences if a mine were sunk there."

As of this date, von Weizsäcker is the only operative in the BRD to admit that the danger of radioactive contamination does not come from nuclear reactors, but from impending worldwide nuclear war.

—James Cleary

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## 'Ending nuclear power means slave labor'

*An article by chief editor Hans Mundorff titled "Nevertheless, Nuclear Energy," in the March 3 Handelsblatt, the German business daily, is excerpted below.*

... Harrisburg will give the opposition to nuclear power a powerful push. The antinuclear tracks we saw in Gorleben will get even longer in the future. The discussions about energy policy and growth in the political parties will be more "Epplerized."

But nothing is going to change in the following situation, despite Harrisburg: there will be no taboo on nuclear power, even if its peaceful use claims some victims. Even the auto motor hasn't been outlawed even

though it has cost hundreds of thousands of people their lives yearly, and gave the last World War its dimensions of mass population destruction. People have gotten used to the horror scenes on the highway. They pay the toll in blood without reservation for the comfort of motorization. They are also going to want to live with the risks of nuclear accidents.

Since the hostile use of nuclear energy, the atom bomb, is not banned, and will surely also belong to the conventional weapons arsenals of some barbaric states in a few decades, what sense does it make to pull ambulances with horses? To be able to continue to build tanks? The nation that forbids the peaceful use of nuclear energy today is going to see reactor towers on his neighbor's border and nuclear bombs in his depot tomorrow. The risk of this energy is worldwide, you cannot flee from it.

And even after Harrisburg, there will be no alternative to the question: if not on nuclear energy, then on what energy are our grandchildren going to live in the year 2010? Without nuclear fission or fusion—both forms of energy are risky — mankind, in its present and continuously expanding extent — cannot survive. Fossil energy stocks are going to be used up in a few decades.

Of course, one might theoretically extend the time period up to this energy gap. One could, for example, dictate zero growth. That policy, however, could not remain limited to GNP, but would also have to be applied to the reproduction of mankind, which also occurs in a geometrical progression. Do you want that? Do you want one gigantic bureaucracy with sole authority over every form of growth, police-state style? Such a bureaucracy, which would obviously have to be a supra-national one, could not be established without war.

One could also sop up the available fossil energy stocks to the last drop and outlaw nuclear energy. One could manage these fossil fuel stocks, rely on alleged social priorities, punish the waste of energy, as was done once before.... One could also increase German coal production to 200 million tons per year, which would of course presuppose slave labor work for workers, the Arbeitsdienst. What would be technically in terms of energy security would be lost in freedom. And instead of our grandchildren having to go without energy, it would only be our great grandchildren who would have to do without.

The SPD presented a discussion thesis on energy policy in March 1977. The insight formulated then is still valid today: "It hardly appears conceivable that things could come to a worldwide outlawing of nuclear energy...."