

The 'Great Green Hope' of F. J. Strauss

by Ranier Apel

The result of the Baden-Wurtemberg state elections in West Germany, giving an increased vote of 5.3 percent to the environmentalist Green Party, seems to conform to a Georgetown Center for Strategic and International Studies script to "let the greens gain, so that Franz Josef Strauss can win the national elections in October." The environmentalist gains are to come at the expense of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's Social Democrats, according to the scenario, but more especially from Schmidt's government-coalition partner, the Free Democratic Party, forcing them out of the coalition, and Schmidt out of the government.

Spokesmen for this scenario to topple Schmidt, such as Kiel professor of political science, Werner Kaltefleiter, have published their views in widely circulated newspaper analyses. Kaltefleiter believes that it will be possible for Bavarian Christian Social Union leader Strauss to become Chancellor if the Green Party is able to cut into the vote of the Social Democrats and Free Democrats' constituencies so that the latter is reduced to less than the five percent of the vote required to participate in a coalition government.

The Green Party can stay below five or slightly above five percent. In either case, as Kaltefleiter himself wrote in the West German daily *Die Welt* March 18, a Green Party in the Bundestag would turn things upside down, and open up the possibility of "new kinds of coalitions." Strauss would be able to govern with a minority government tolerated by the Green Party caucus, or would even form a coalition with them.

The latter trend is confirmed in interviews given to *EIR* by Mrs. Noelle-Neumann, a member of a prominent public polling institution, who said that the general trend of the greens is toward "conservative outlooks." Strauss, of course, leads West Germany's extreme right-wing.

Where are the CDU votes?

While the West German press in general is suggesting that the greens will steal Social Democratic and Free Democratic votes, better informed newspapers such as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* take note of the fact

that one of the most striking results of the Baden-Wurtemberg elections is that the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the main opposition party, lost 3.4 percent of its votes as compared to the 1976 elections. This reveals some of the specific characteristics of the Green Party "surprise" phenomenon.

The 5.3 vote for the greens in that state was to a large extent orchestrated through a shift of votes from the CDU to the greens. This might sound strange to political observers who would rather tend to believe that if there is any viable option for Strauss to win by aid of the greenie "fourth" party, he must see to it that the Christian Democratic allies of his Christian Social Union do not lose any votes to other parties. How else could he hope to gather the necessary 46 or 47 percent of the total vote in the Oct. 5 national elections?

Recent public opinion polls show that while Strauss's popularity is around 25 percent, Schmidt's is at 55 percent or more. It would therefore seem risky for Strauss to allow his own constituency to drift away to the greenie side.

There is no doubt that the Social Democracy, weakened programatically by 10 to 12 years of liberalization under chairman Willy Brandt, has lost votes to the Green Party, especially from young voters. This goes for the Free Democrats, too. As for the Christian Democracy, however, this has been considered the party of industry, of technological progress, and of nuclear energy since the late Konrad Adenauer's chancellorship. How is it possible that this party could lose votes to the opposite side of the political spectrum, the greens?

In fact, ever since Franz Josef Strauss pulled a successful coup to become the joint chancellor candidate of the Christian Democracy and Christian Social Union in the summer of 1979, an oligarchical, antitechnology current formerly underground in secret associations like the Anthroposophical Society has come publicly to the fore in the Christian Democratic Union. Appealing to small shop-owners, state officials, general "petit bourgeois" and backward-farmer outlooks, spokesmen for this strata include Walter Leisler Kiep, Kurt Biedenkopf, Ernst Albrecht and Manfred Wörner among CDU leaders. The Malthusian outlook of these currents has determined the CDU's policy since Strauss took the number one position, placing the Christian Democratic Union, for the moment, on the same side of the political spectrum as the greens, quite susceptible to losing or shifting votes to them.

This CDU degeneration is best demonstrated in a press release issued by Kurt Biedenkopf in Dusseldorf March 18. Said this CDU leader: "The Green Party is welcomed as a new competitor on the political scene... a vital new element in our parliaments... We promise them a fair chance in the Ruhr state elections..."

Biedenkopf's statement is the more revealing in that it is well-known in West Germany that the hard-core of the Green Party is composed of former members of the avowedly neofascist National Demokratische Partei (NPD). The NPD was created in the 1960s, and then quickly disappeared after it had been employed for a similar "shift the votes" operation at that time.

The big test

The first big test for Strauss's great green hope will be the May 11 elections in the industrial-heartland state of North-Rhine Westphalia. In this state, a dense network of SPD-linked trade unions and industrial organizations has, with the exception of a few green spots, reduced greenie political organizing to a very low profile.

With his statement of welcome to the greenies, Biedenkopf is surely intending to build a bridge for them into the Ruhr, but this might heavily backfire on the CDU. If the Schmidt forces recognize the big opportunity this Biedenkopf move opens up for the Social Democrats, and if the Schmidt forces rid themselves of spokesmen for the greenie ferment within the SPD itself (Hans Eppler, Klaus Traube and others), Schmidt could even win an absolute majority in this year's elections ending dependence on the weak Free Democrats.

The SPD in the Ruhr should in fact be able to hand a devastating defeat to the Christian Democratic Union in that state. As all leading polls show, Schmidt is approaching voter approval ratios of above 50 percent, while Strauss is heading down to between 25 and 30 percent. With Strauss and Biedenkopf performing their machinations a little too openly, Schmidt should produce a deep break in traditional CDU constituencies that feel deprived of a candidate of their own this year.

There is no reason for Schmidt to hesitate. The international climate featuring his alliance with France's Giscard d'Estaing, and Giscard's Arab petrodollar-holding friends, has permitted the financial and industrial machine of West Germany to find the financing and political clout to defy the environmentalists and the British and U.S. governments alike by announcing its intention to launch a major export drive. Schmidt has the advantage. Those behind Strauss and his new green friends do not.

One Georgetown strategist admitted as much in a recent interview. The CIA has lots of dirty tricks capabilities. But not in West Germany at present, he stated, "We can't do it right now." But if Schmidt and his forces hesitate to exploit the "favorable moment," the CDU, with help from U.S. "dirty tricks," might be able to shift enough of its own votes to the Green Party to raise them to the 4.9 percent or more that would wipe out the Free Democrats. In that case, the Schmidt government falls, and the consequences could make the world a very unpleasant place in which to live shortly thereafter.

MIDDLE EAST

French diplomacy's attack on Camp David

by Nancy Coker

French President Giscard d'Estaing's recent diplomatic initiatives for securing a comprehensive Middle East peace settlement is a direct and deliberate challenge to the Camp David "partial peace" plan of the Carter administration.

In an effort to counter France's peace efforts, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington have decided to bring down the hard-line government of Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and replace it with a less intransigent regime capable of salvaging the Camp David peace process, now blocked largely because of Begin's refusal to make concessions on the critical question of Palestinian autonomy.

This week, Carrington held an extended strategy session in London with a delegation of top British and French Jewish community leaders led by Alain de Rothschild to reaffirm British support for Camp David and to pledge that London will not interfere with the pact. The Zionist leaders with whom Carrington met are the same ones who control the puppet strings of the faltering Begin coalition and of Begin's probable replacement, opposition Labour Party leader Shimon Peres.

France: a new reality

In moving to dump Begin, Britain and the United States are, responding to the "new reality" that France's Middle East diplomacy has imposed upon them. This new reality dictates that unless some kind of Anglo-American Middle East initiative is consolidated that is capable of shoring up Camp David and throwing Europe's peace drive off balance, the United States and Britain will be locked out of the Middle East.

Backed by Socialist International leaders Willy Brandt of West Germany and Chancellor Bruno Kreisky of Austria, the Vance-Carrington faction of Anglo-American "realists" is negotiating with Zionists both inside and outside Israel to topple Begin and install a Peres government. Peres's job would be to make more concessions to Egypt and the Palestinians and, in so doing, somehow salvage the Palestinian autonomy talks before the scheduled May 26 deadline.