

## Germany: parties mobilize for nuclear energy

Within the last week, both West German governing parties, the Social Democrats and tiny Free Democrats, have shown unambiguous support for nuclear energy and have challenged the environmentalists and zero-growthers within their own ranks.

The Free Democratic party convention in Bremen June 15 gave FDP Chairman and West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher a five to one margin in support of nuclear energy after he told the convention that peace and prosperity depends on the development of nuclear energy. Besides nuclear energy, there is no alternative to coal, gas or oil."

On June 19, Herbert Wehner, the Social Democratic parliamentary caucus chairman, warned environmentalists in the SPD: "Do not play around with issues like this one... the energy issue determines the economic existence of the BRD, and the country's ability to maintain its industrial capacities."

Both the FDP and SPD party moves are designed to back up Chancellor Helmut Schmidt in his fight against antinuclear forces in both his cabinet and the two parties that form his governing coalition. In the cabinet, the major opponent of nuclear energy is Economics Minister Count von Lambsdorff, a member of the Mont Pelerin Society, vice-chairman of the FDP, and the strongest supporter of the speculative activity on the Rotterdam oil market, which, he says, merely reflects the workings of the free market system. Lambsdorff has his own followings among environmentalist FDP members. But in the SPD, the major party figure attacking the Schmidt government's nuclear program is its chairman, Willy Brandt, the protector of the SPD's zero-growth "left wing."

### Lambsdorff countered

Schmidt has moved against Lambsdorff in several ways. He has strengthened his own base in the SPD by having Egon Franke, the leader of the pronuclear "Sewer Workers" faction of the SPD, state that "Schmidt must remain chancellor for many years to come." Then, while Lambsdorff was justifying higher oil prices at the June 13 cabinet meeting, Schmidt interrupted with the criticism that "this has little to do with the fact that the energy issue is one of the fateful decisions." After telling the cabinet that "wars, starvation, and natural catastrophes will occur without cheap energy," he told Lambsdorff that, as Chancellor, he will no longer support "opportunism" on the energy issue.

Later, at the FDP's June 19 convention that Lambsdorff attended, party chairman Genscher delivered a

forceful pronuclear address, even though Lambsdorff was backing a resolution against a nuclear waste reprocessing plant at Goerloben, and insisting from the convention floor that oil price increases were "necessary." A 50-person pronuclear caucus surfaced at the convention, insisting that the Gorleben waste plant be built. To top off the environmentalist rout, Genscher let it be known that the FDP economics minister in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Hans Riemer, was being asked to resign because his environmentalism was costing the FDP votes.

After the convention, which ended on June 17, Foreign Minister Genscher visited Libya, where he secured an agreement for increased oil deliveries to the BRD and then returned to Bonn to meet with the Tunisian foreign minister. On June 23, Genscher will visit Saudi Arabia, and will visit Iraq after he returns from the Tokyo summit. Although Genscher's topic is clearly the economic one of securing cheap oil supplies, he is not taking Economics Minister Lambsdorff along on any of his trips.

### Euroenergy grid

The SPD is handling its own environmentalists with a two-pronged attack. On the same day that Wehner laid down the party line on the necessity for nuclear energy, a member of the government-linked Ebenhausen think-tank published an article in the prestigious *Europa Archiv* on "Pan-European Cooperation in the Energy Area—A New Start for East-West Cooperation." The article used a computer analysis of the future problems facing both the Soviet Union and the West in energy to advocate a pan-European electricity grid, power plant hook ups across borders, and interlinked natural gas lines as the maximally productive and efficient energy system for both East and West Europe. The Soviets proposed such a system in both 1971 and 1975, the article states, and such a grid is the only way the East bloc countries can both increase their energy input and their exports to the West. Chancellor Schmidt is a member of the Board of *Europa Archiv*.

Wehner has already begun to implement the party line through two maneuvers that have the SPD environmentalists into a rage. The SPD party presidium has decided to call a party convention in December on the themes of "Human Growth" and "Securing the Peace." All resolutions will be screened and limited to the two topics before they reach the floor. This will prevent the SPD meeting from being flooded with antinuclear resolutions as in the past. The SPD state organization in Baden-Württemberg, headed by environmentalist Erhard Eppler, was disciplined June 20 when the SPD-dominated DGB state trade union federations said that it would withhold support if Eppler continued to use the SPD state organization to organize against nuclear power.

—James Cleary