
WEST GERMANY

The Club of Rome and the opposition party

by Susan Welsh



Franz Josef Strauss

West Germany's major opposition party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) is undergoing the gravest political crisis in its history. The crisis goes far beyond the simple fact that the party's candidate in October's elections for federal chancellor, Franz Josef Strauss of the Christian Social Union (CSU), is universally expected to lose to Social Democrat Helmut Schmidt: the CDU, power base of German industry since it was founded by Konrad Adenauer after World War II, is being taken over by the "limits to growth" fanatics of the Club of Rome.

Adenauer forged his party in a bitter postwar struggle for German national identity, against the factions in the Anglo-American occupation forces who wanted to dismantle German industry lock, stock and barrel. The British and their proposal even called for the mass sterilization of German males to prevent the rebirth of the German nation in any form.

Adenauer patiently but tenaciously combatted these brutal policies for twenty years, and founded the CDU on the principles of Christian humanism and industrial progress, as a vehicle for that struggle.

Today, the British are taking their revenge.

Demoralization of the party

When the CDU suffered a major defeat in the May state legislative elections in the largest industrial state, North Rhine-Westphalia, analysts began to speak of a deep demoralization in the party. The election was taken as a bell-wether for the federal elections in October. It was apparent to all that Strauss's demagoguery was no real challenge to Schmidt's widespread popularity through-

out the Federal Republic. In fact, demoralization in both the CDU and its Bavarian ally, the CSU, has been growing ever since Strauss was named the standard-bearer for the coalition last year. Strauss is known as a right-wing extremist, opposed to detente with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. He secured the parties' nomination through a combination of blackmail and the failure of the CDU to put forward any candidate of stature. Since Strauss's nomination, the CDU has become increasingly fragmented, and no longer has any kind of centralized national machine. Oldline leaders with a national base have left politics or been squeezed out, making way in the federal parliament for unknowns with little national constituency and a concern only with local issues.

Two political operations are being run on this demoralized party, both under the control of the Club of Rome and allied institutions. First is a move to turn the CDU/CSU into an openly neo-fascist party; second is a more "liberal" operation aimed to coopt industrialists to support the Club of Rome policies. These two political tendencies are being run by the same people, and will probably be used simultaneously in the coming months in a "Mutt and Jeff" routine to finish off the party's traditional base.

At the CDU party congress in West Berlin May 19-20, the "jackboot" operation was predominant. As Great Britain fostered the Nazi movement during the 1930s as a battering ram against the German working class and industrialists, to have Germany strike East against the Soviet Union, so now the Anglo-Americans are creating a neofascist strike-force based on the policies of radical

environmentalism. While Strauss and his supporters hint darkly that Chancellor Schmidt has "Nazi connections," it is they and their overseas backers who are pushing the policies of a feudalist new "Dark Age" for Europe.

Strauss proclaimed the congress to be the *Götterdämmerung* ("twilight of the gods") which would see the downfall of Chancellor Schmidt—an image taken from the operas of Richard Wagner which dominated the *volkisch* mass meetings of the Nazi era. Like Hitler, whose base was among petty shopkeepers and the middle class, Strauss demagogically attacked "big industry" and its support for Helmut Schmidt. Schmidt "sits with the rich, the nobles, and the industry managers," whereas "I speak the language of the little man. . . . My father was a butcher," Strauss intoned. CSU General Secretary Stoiber charged Schmidt with fraternizing with Warburg and Münchmeyer, the backers of Hitler. And Richard von Weizsäcker, a member of the London International Institute of Strategic Studies (IISS)—a leading center of Anglo-American control—called on the party to orient itself more to the younger generation, which he said is adopting non-material values akin to Islamic fundamentalism, and is increasingly "fascinated" by the idea of a new "Dark Age."

Strauss has openly discussed the possibility of an alliance with the environmentalist Green Party to defeat Schmidt in the elections. This assault on industry and the very idea of industrial development has so disgusted leading German industrialists that the industrial federations did not even send representatives to the CDU congress, as they have in the past.

Strauss's campaign is not nationalist, but seeks to destroy republican nationalism in the German population. He also seeks openly to destroy West Germany's alliance with France for the leadership of Europe, and its ties to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Strauss's concept is the "Europe of the Regions" feudalism preached by Otto von Hapsburg's Pan-European Union—a concept which is inimical to the idea of the humanist nation-state. In a speech earlier in May, Strauss demanded that Europe abandon the "egoism of the nation-states" in the interests of "culture and freedom." At the West Berlin congress, he accused Schmidt of "bringing about the super-power designs of the Soviet Union" through his "wrong, dangerous and fatal" detente policy. Schmidt's alliance with President Giscard of France is also a disaster, Strauss charged, since the duplicitous French President "tricked" Schmidt by going to Warsaw to meet Soviet President Brezhnev.

In addition to the Strauss stormtrooper operation, the CDU's "liberals" in three-piece suits are pushing a program of fascism with a slightly more democratic face. They have proposed that Strauss "improve his election

chances" by appointing an advisory team of "moderates" to soften his image as a war-monger. These CDU "liberals" include:

Kurt Biedenkopf, who oversaw the CDU defeat in North Rhine-Westphalia. Trained at Jesuit-founded Georgetown University, Biedenkopf is a collaborator of the Club of Rome. The Bonn Institute for Social Research which he helped to found cosponsored a joint CDU/Club of Rome conference last spring on the topic "For a Viable Future Environment."

Walter Leisler-Kiep, a member of the Trilateral Commission who set up Strauss's visit to the United States earlier this year. Strauss met with several members of the Carter cabinet and with thinktankers at Georgetown University to plan strategy to topple Chancellor Schmidt and destroy the European Monetary System.

Ernst Albrecht, a protégé of Leisler-Kiep, is described by many as the probable next leader of the CDU. Albrecht, as minister president of the state of Lower Saxony, oversaw the defeat of a Bonn program for building a nuclear reprocessing facility in his state. This has led to the stalling of virtually every nuclear power plant construction project in the country. Albrecht's economics minister in Lower Saxony is Eduard Pestel, a leading light of the Club of Rome.

The Club of Rome scenarios for the CDU can easily backfire, however, sending the industrial base of the party over to Helmut Schmidt. This has already happened to a considerable degree, as the *Münchener Merkur* newspaper pointed out May 22. Strauss's demagogic approach has created a near-rebellion in the CDU/CSU, and Schmidt's growing popularity is reaching "deep into the CDU constituency," the paper said. Even the small and medium-sized entrepreneurs from Bavaria who Strauss claims as his base are shifting over to Schmidt, since many of them are high-technology companies that rely heavily on East-West trade for their livelihoods.

But the Club of Rome and its allies have a flanking operation going in Schmidt's own Social Democratic Party, which is intended to push the Chancellor toward the "appropriate technologies" policies of the Brandt Commission. According to one scenario, if the Social Democrats win an absolute majority in the fall elections and decide to govern without their present tiny coalition partner, the Free Democratic Party, then Schmidt will become "hostage" to the party left wing of Willy Brandt, "Ayatollah" Gerhard Eppler, et al. They will force him to abandon his support for nuclear energy and high-technology Third World development, thereby breaking off his support from industry. Only if Schmidt moves decisively against these "left" policies can he rally the support of his real constituency, the workers and industrialists of West Germany.