
Western Europe

New movement, Patriots for Germany, leads resistance to Sovietization

by Rainer Apel

In West Germany, the year's end marks the beginning of the "hot phase" of the national campaign for election of parliament on Jan. 25. If the opinion polls don't lie, Christian Democratic (CDU) Chancellor Helmut Kohl may be re-elected for a second term.

Another Kohl government in Bonn won't be stable, however, because the traditional conservative currents in the CDU no longer have a say in the party. Many of the Christian Democrats entering the new parliament will belong to the faction of Christian liberals, which conservatives in Germany call the "Moscow Faction." The new CDU parliamentary group will be much more susceptible to Soviet pressure, helpless against Western trends to decouple the Atlantic Alliance. Rumors even have it that there is a plot afoot to have Chancellor Kohl, a relic of the "traditional CDU," removed mid-term, to replace him with a proponent of the CDU's "Moscow Faction."

The consolidation of this "Moscow Faction" inside the CDU, and the emergence of the Patriots for Germany, the political party campaigning for the traditional Western values sacrificed by the CDU, are the two most salient features of political change in West Germany during 1986. Never since the founding of this second republic in Germany in 1949, has there been such a clear distinction between the "Soviet" and the "American" party.

At stake is a decision to remain in the Western camp and in NATO, in the alliance with the United States, or the alternate decision to cut loose from the Americans and seek a decoupled future within the Soviet sphere of influence. The first, pro-Western road to the future is what the Patriots for Germany fight for; the second road is chosen by all the other political parties of the country. Hence, the Jan. 25, 1987 elections are a watershed: Much will depend on the political impact the Patriots' campaign will have on the election as a whole, as well as on the vote turnout for the Patriots' candidates and slates.

Very early in 1986, there were unmistakable signs of a profound change inside the Christian Democrats. The signing of a so-called "German-American cooperation agreement on SDI" a few days before Easter documented the case. In spite of abundant information on the Soviet build-up of anti-missile capabilities, which the Pentagon and its experts had for-

warded to the Bonn government over more than 30 months, Kohl was not willing to sign a substantive cooperation treaty with the Reagan government.

Instead of making SDI a defense issue, the chancellor stuck to his policy of "peace with ever-fewer weapons" and decided to treat SDI as a "project with interesting aspects for future civilian technologies." German participation in the project was kept as tiny and unofficial as possible, and the accord signed with the United States was defined as a "framework agreement" on the level of a "memorandum of understanding."

The helter-skelter in Bonn on SDI documented that the pro-American faction still remaining in the CDU, while expelled from the other parties long ago, was now on its way out. Many Germans still committed to the alliance with the United States and to a strong defense began to turn their backs on the CDU and Chancellor Kohl.

This was the political hour of the new movement, Patriots for Germany, founded in autumn 1985. In the five months after its founding, the Patriots had addressed the issues in a series of ads in several national newspapers, meeting broad and positive response. The CDU's failure to win the struggle with its liberal coalition partner in Bonn, the Free Democrats of Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and the failure of the pro-SDI current in the CDU to win over the anti-SDI current, were among the developments which led the Patriots to decide to run as a new party in the next elections.

Lower Saxony elections

The first testing-ground for the new party was the state election campaign in Lower Saxony. In only two months, from the end of March to May 12, the Patriots organized a membership base, nominated a candidate, and collected campaign funds in every one of the 100 election districts of the State of Lower Saxony. The dynamism of the newly founded party took the established parties by surprise, especially the CDU. The new party met special attention also because it was cooperating with the National Democratic Policy Committee (NDPC)—the "LaRouche wing of the American Democratic Party," which had become prominent in the German media after its first striking victory in the Illinois primaries.

The Patriots met strong assent among farmers, engineers, shop-owners, military people, and all those strata of the electorate whose values had been betrayed by the CDU and the other political parties. This provoked, naturally, a fierce campaign of harassment from the "established parties," including the activation of corrupted editors in the press of Lower Saxony, who organized an almost total blackout of coverage on the Patriots toward the end of the campaign.

But the 0.3% of the vote which the Patriots received sufficed to deliver a warning message especially to the Christian Democrats. The Bavarian state section of the CDU, the Christian Social Union (CSU), warned a few days after June 15 that a repetition of the Patriots' success in Lower Saxony in the Bavarian state elections on Oct. 12 had to be "prevented at all costs." The Bonn correspondent of the *New York Times*, James Markham, wrote that with the 0.3% of the Patriots on June 15, the ideas of the NDPC had made it into the political landscape of West Germany. Markham's headline on page one of the *International Herald Tribune* read: "LaRouche has a foot in the door in Germany."

On Aug. 3, an initiating committee was founded in Rudesheim on the Rhine to set up the Patriots as a national party, electing Helga Zepp-LaRouche as national chairman and Brig.-Gen. (ret.) Friedrich W. Grünewald as vice-chairman. The gathering of 100 delegates from all over West Germany resolved to set up local chapters and nominate candidates in as many of the 248 election districts as possible in the short time left until the start of the national election campaign.

The founding convention was already inspired by the firm commitment to fight the increasing trend inside the CDU to accommodate to the "withdrawalists" of the Gramm-Rudman current around Sam Nunn and Bill Roth in the United States, and seductive offers from the Soviet side to say goodbye to U.S. military presence in Germany and strike a "historic deal" with Moscow. The term "Moscow Faction in the CDU" was coined and massively used in the political organizing of the Patriots.

Patriots fight CDU 'Moscow Faction'

That "Moscow Faction," which also extended into the slightly more conservative CSU of Bavaria, made itself heard nationally at the end of September, when the conservative press began circulating rumors that Soviet ruler Gorbachov was considering offering reunification to the Germans on the condition that the West Germans made themselves "more independent" of the United States. This rumor was also nurtured by Foreign Minister Genscher, who had, after his July trip to Moscow, begun a personal campaign around the pro-Soviet notion of a "common home of Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals."

By late September—two weeks before the Reykjavik summit—an almost undifferentiated chorus of pro-Soviet arms control proposals was forming among all the established parties in the Bonn parliament, ranging from the extreme "left" Green Party and the Social Democrats to the liberal

Free Democrats and most of the prominent spokesmen of the Christian Democrats. Gorbachov's game was quite visibly to lure Reagan into a summit agreement unfavorable to Europe, and rally the Europeans, with the West Germans in the first place, into his gambit.

This coup did not work, because Reagan refused, at Reykjavik, to make the concessions on SDI Gorbachov had wanted. Irony had it that just during the Reykjavik weekend, the Patriots held their national campaign convention, with more than 100 candidates for the 1987 campaign attending and debating how to stop the Sovietization of politics in West Germany. The convention in Worms found itself in the middle of stepped up public activities of the CDU's "Moscow Faction," which tried to exploit the post-summit confusion about the official U.S. position on the "zero option" on nuclear missiles in Europe. It could not have been more obvious why the Patriots' effort was so vital for the survival of West Germany as a Western country than during this party convention in Worms on Oct. 12.

The "Moscow Faction" made itself heard again all over West Germany in early November. Bernhard Friedmann, a prominent representative of the CDU in the budgetary commission of the Bonn parliament, called on Chancellor Kohl to "make the reunification of Germany a topic on the next summit agenda" between Reagan and Gorbachov. Friedmann said that the "zero option" meant Soviet predominance in Europe in the sphere of conventional and nuclear short-range military capabilities. He also stated that there was "no majority for more defense in the West," so that only a "historic deal with Moscow," based on economic cooperation with the Soviet economy, could render West Germany safe from the Red Army. Under the regime of Gramm-Rudman, Friedmann slyly added, any hope that the United States would maintain its military commitments to Europe and West Germany was in vain.

Friedmann is close to Lothar Späth, the pro-Soviet CDU governor of the West German state of Baden-Württemberg, said to be the "Moscow Faction's" choice for the mid-term replacement to Chancellor Kohl in 1988-89. Späth is the apparent choice also of Gorbachov, who signed an economic contract with two Baden-Württemberg industrial companies on Nov. 19 totaling about \$250 million.

Chancellor Kohl's remarks to *Newsweek* magazine, which likened Gorbachov to Nazi propagandist Josef Goebbels, were taken as a welcome pretext by Gorbachov to tell the chancellor to accept the rule of his own CDU's "Moscow Faction." Gorbachov's message to Kohl is that he may be re-elected, but only as a pawn in the hands of the "Moscow Faction," and only until the date will be chosen for his "mid-term replacement." Except for the efforts of the Patriots for Germany, the country's loss as an ally for the West would appear certain. The Patriots began the hot phase of this election campaign by nationally distributing a million flyers, headlined: "No to the Empire of Evil." The flyer shows Gorbachov, with Josef Stalin watching from the background.