

there were provocateurs, whom did they work for? A key role was played, for example, by the leftist Turkish terrorists of Devrimci Sol (DevSol), and the communist TKP-ML.

In July 1991, the 4,000-member DevSol had set off alarm bells when it called on other left-wing organizations to jointly "attack German-Turkish relations" and to cooperate in the underground creation of joint "autonomous self-defense structures." As recently as May 24, five days before the Solingen tragedy, German police searched DevSol facilities in several cities around Solingen, finding that the group had a well-built underground structure. As to the TKP-ML group, its watchword is: "Death to German imperialism."

Ostensibly, the violent alliance of leftist Turks and Germans in the Solingen rioting was the first joint exercise of the type that DevSol had called for in 1991. Their mutual target is the "Fourth Reich" which the united Germany allegedly represents. This resonates with international anti-German propaganda, suggesting that the provocateurs' stringpullers should be sought among enemies of the united Germany in the West and in the East.

Geopolitical aims exposed

Ironically, it was not a German newspaper, but the journal of the Turkish Islamicists, *Zaman*, which wrote on June 1 that the Solingen incidents may have been used to try to wreck the rapprochement between Turkey and Germany that resulted from Chancellor Helmut Kohl's recent talks with the new Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, especially in view of a joint strategy that the two leaders envisioned toward the Islamic states of Central Asia.

Zaman wrote that vital strategic and economic geopolitical interests—American, French, British, and Israeli ones—in Central Asia and the Mideast were affected by the Demirel-Kohl agreement, and that, hence, the authors of the Solingen arson attack and the riots afterward have to be sought among the geopoliticians.

It is known, *Zaman* wrote, that many foreign intelligence agencies operate in Germany's underground, and one of these foreign agents may have prompted neo-Nazi youth to set the Solingen fire. Another article by *Zaman* on June 8 made the same point, and even *Sabah*, usually not pro-German in its coverage, on June 9 warned Turks living in Germany not to launch counter-violence against German skinheads, hinting that somebody used these arson attacks to set a trap to ruin Turko-German relations.

Turkish Prime Minister Erdal Inonu on May 31 called on Turkish protesters in Germany to refrain from violence. "The purpose of this act [the arson] is to create a separation between the Turkish and German communities and to force Turks to leave there," he told Turkish Radio and Television (TRT). "We need to behave carefully, with responsibility. We must fulfill this hard duty by showing reactions which express our grief within civilized limits, and by continuing to ask for the necessary measures."

Swiss voters approve modernizing Air Force

by Alexander Hartmann

On June 6, Swiss voters rejected two pacifist initiatives that would have severely crippled the ability of the Swiss Air Force and Army to modernize their equipment. With 55% of the eligible voters voting, an initiative against buying new fighter planes was defeated with 57% opposed, and 55% objected to proposed legislation that would have prevented the allocation of new land for the Army. This is a larger margin than generally expected; several months ago, when petitioners gathered 200,000 signatures in only 12 days, many expected both initiatives to pass without trouble. About 30,000—mostly teenagers—attended an open-air rock festival organized in support of the initiatives. Serbian atrocities against defenseless Bosnian civilians were one of the factors tilting the balance against the initiatives.

The legislation proposed would have a) ruled out any decision on the purchase of new fighter planes of any kind before the year 2000, thus preventing the Air Force from getting new planes before about 2005; b) nullified the decision of both Parliament and government to purchase 34 McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 fighter planes worth \$2.5 billion; c) prevented the allocation of new land for military purposes and ordered the dismantling of a barrack built recently near St. Gallen; and d) put any construction on military premises (now governed by federal law) under the authority of the cantons.

Pro-military groups, among them reservist associations, rifle clubs, and all conservative parties, mobilized against the legislation and rallied more than 30,000 citizens in front of the Swiss Parliament in Bern, with banners reading: "Liberty Has Its Price," and "For Switzerland with an Army!" They pointed to the fact that, while the present Mirage fighter planes are already outdated now, by 2005, they will be about 50 years old, which would render them completely useless. As one military observer noted, "We will then be ready to take on Liechtenstein," which has about 25,000 inhabitants.

The initiative preventing the allocation of new land for military purposes would make it impossible to adapt the Swiss Army's strategy to new challenges, while changing the legal status of projects for the construction of military infrastructure would make it much more difficult, if not impossible, to adapt military buildings to new weapon technologies—for example, training soldiers on simulators.

Pro-Army activists also pointed to the instability caused by the collapse of the former Soviet Union, which eliminated the nuclear threat of Moscow against Europe for the time being, but unleashed numerous conflicts that can easily escalate into a threat against Europe as a whole, including Switzerland. In that case, Swiss patriots do not want to be dependent on friendly NATO armies. Fernand Carrel, head of the Swiss Air Force, was quoted in the London *Financial Times*, saying: "If we do not defend our air space, NATO will, and it will do so without taking our interests into account."

Whittling the Army away

The initiators of the anti-Army legislation, among them Swiss national counsellors (deputies) Paul Rechsteiner and Andreas Gross, both members of the Social Democratic Party (SP), and Pia Hollenstein of the ecologist Green Party, were already active on these issues in 1989, when a "Group for Switzerland without an Army" proposed legislation that would have simply abolished the Army altogether.

At the time, their proposal was defeated by a two-to-one margin. Now, they suffered defeat again, but this will not stop their efforts: They have already gathered enough signatures to force a vote on legislation outlawing exports of military equipment, and cutting the military budget by half. Other initiatives to stop civil defense, turn the Swiss Army into an all-volunteer force by abolishing the draft, outlaw Swiss participation in international military structures, and eliminate the Army as a whole have been announced, and are in preparation.

The target of the anti-Army activists is less the military as such, than the notion of an armed neutrality or a "nation under arms." Every able-bodied man between 18 and 50 is drafted every year for an average of three weeks into military service, thus keeping the whole male population of Switzerland ready for combat on very short notice. Within a few days, the Army can mobilize 500,000 soldiers to protect 6.8 million citizens. In a crisis, there are bomb shelters for 80% of the population. All this serves not only to defend Switzerland if necessary, but it brings the dedication to the nation as a whole to the minds of the citizens. Thus, the Swiss Army is one of the key institution holding Switzerland, a multicultural society like Lebanon or Bosnia used to be, together as a nation.

While it may hard to imagine one of the richest nations in the world falling into civil war, voting patterns in recent referendums have documented diverging tendencies among the cantons. Italian-speaking Ticino and the French-speaking "Suisse Romande" have voted in favor of joining the International Monetary Fund and the European Community, while the German-speaking cantons were against these initiatives. The anti-Army initiatives were approved by Italian Ticino and the French Geneva and Jura cantons, while three other French-speaking cantons approved at least one of the two initiatives. In the German part, only the two cantons in the

Basel area, which is the most industrialized area of Switzerland, voted in favor of the initiatives, with a strong pro-initiatives influence of the socialists and the trade unions. Only about 100 years ago, civil war between the German majority and a coalition of Italian and French cantons called the "Sonderbund" claimed many casualties.

Even though the pro-Army groups claim that the June 6 votes were the final defeat of the anti-Army initiatives, it may well turn out to be different: While before, about two-thirds of the electorate defended the Army, their vote now went down considerably, reducing the margin by half. In fact, the anti-Army groups have made progress, and they have not given up on whittling away the Army, and the willingness of citizens to defend Switzerland. In this case, they picked up on the debate within the military, whether the McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 is "enough plane for the money," and pointed to the fact that the decision to purchase the American planes was taken when George Bush was begging for European (financial) support for "Operation Desert Storm" to bomb Iraq back to the Stone Age. Purchasing the planes was a way for Switzerland to show solidarity without compromising its neutrality. But the law against buying any fighter planes at all for the next eight years would have applied to any other plane as well. The F/A-18 may have competitors, but certainly they are much more fit for combat than the Mirage fighters currently in service.

Serbian atrocities shaped the discussion

What may have saved the Swiss Air Force, and was a major factor in the debate, was the war in nearby Bosnia. As the Serbian campaign of "ethnic cleansing" and genocide escalated in recent months, it became obvious what can happen if a people does not have adequate means to protect itself against aggression. Five times a day, TV news brought the reality of this war into every Swiss home, with images of children mutilated and women raped.

One of the pamphlets opposing the initiatives read: "Only a few hundred kilometers from the borders of Switzerland a brutal genocide is being committed. Only a little farther away, civil and religious wars are raging. To make Switzerland defenseless in our time of heightened instability would be irresponsible." Another group points to the Scud missiles owned by Arab countries and Israel. Serbia has such missiles, too, which can strike as far as southern Germany. When the military commander of the Serb forces in Bosnia, Mladic, proposed to move the front "to the Trieste-Vienna corridor," this did not go unnoticed in Switzerland. If the Serbian butchers can get away with challenging not only neutral Austria—whose only recourse in case of a threat to its security is the same U.N. Security Council whose reliability has been thoroughly discredited by its tolerance of Serbian atrocities—but even Italy, which is a member of NATO, Swiss citizens realized they have to be prepared to defend themselves.