

Green Party gains threaten Kohl regime

by Michael Weissbach

In municipal elections on Sept. 30 in the most populous and highly industrialized state of the Federal Republic of Germany, North Rhine-Westphalia, the fascist Green party emerged the only strong winner, capitalizing on voters' disillusionment with the traditional ruling parties.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) polled 42.2%, a 4% loss, and is now, for the first time since the early 1950s, no longer the largest party in local government. The Social Democrats (SPD) polled 42.5%, a 2.4% drop. And this is their party's traditional stronghold, the industrial heartland of Germany. Finally, the Free Democrats (FDP) sank from 6.5% to 4.8%—beneath the threshold required for parliamentary representation.

The Greens have replaced the FDP as the political "swing party," the maker or breaker of coalition governments. They scored almost 9%, and in some of the smaller cities up to 16%, as in the university town of Muenster. In Bonn, the capital of the Federal Republic, they received 12.3%. The 23 biggest cities in the state will all have Green city councilmen, and some are undoubtedly heading for local-level "Red-Green" coalitions with the Social Democrats.

The Green victories consolidate the gains they made in the European Parliament elections in June, when they polled an unprecedented 8.2% of the vote.

This election marks a turning point in the postwar history of the country. The Greens hitherto had the greatest difficulty in getting a foothold in the SPD-dominated working-class layers of the Ruhr region. Their votes in recent years never exceeded 1-2%, whereas in more rural, backward areas of Germany, the Greens had been able to gain seats in local and regional governments.

There are a number of reasons for these shocking results. First of all, the credibility of the so-called established parties, but especially the ruling coalition of Christian Democrats and the Free Democrats, has deteriorated rapidly as the economic crisis in the Ruhr area became more desperate and the Kohl government in Bonn continued to predict that prosperity was just around the corner. The steel industry and coal mining in the Ruhr collapsed, and unemployment reached levels of up to 18 and 20% in industrial centers like Duisburg, Gelsen-

kirchen, and Dortmund. Because of this rising unemployment, demoralization and despair spread among the working-class layers, but also among the unemployed youth, which the Greens and the left wing of the SPD could easily take advantage of. A continuing process of radicalization at the base of the trade unions and the left SPD was the result.

Second, the population of the country has been bombarded by the media with environmentalist propaganda for years. Political discussions are dominated by the phony issue of "the dying German forests." As the votes of the Greens in other areas of Germany rose and as they began to gain seats in state parliaments in Hesse and other regions, the Greens gained credibility, not just among student and youth layers.

Third, the rising votes for the Greens reflect a dangerous process of demoralization and resignation on the part of a growing portion of the German population. This is also expressed in the fact that the turnout for the North Rhine-Westphalian elections was a record low for the postwar period, with 36% of the population refusing to go to the polls at all.

Who are the Greens?

Since the Greens first appeared on the political scene, they have campaigned to turn the industrial republic of Germany into a rural "paradise" without industry, modern technology, and big cities. They have sabotaged major industrial projects like nuclear power plants, airports, and transport routes. In the state of Hesse, they formed a quasi-official government coalition with the ruling SPD of Governor Holger Börner, who had previously denounced them—correctly—as "eco-fascists."

It is the Greens, together with the Communists and the left SPD, who have organized the "peace movement," with financial backing from the Soviet Union. They are the front line in the campaign to get West Germany out of NATO, and they are the main force behind the terrorist acts and sabotage against NATO maneuvers and American military installations.

Next year, Germany will have state elections in North Rhine-Westphalia, in the Saarland—another crisis-stricken steel area, and in West Berlin. Red-Green coalitions are a possibility in each of these situations. If the states of Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia, and the Saar all move in this direction, 40% of the Federal Republic and its most concentrated industrial areas, will be under the control of Moscow's "fifth column."

The European Labor Party (ELP) and its chairman Helga Zepp-LaRouche have for years warned of the threat which the Greens represent and demanded that they be banned. The larger parties lacked the courage to support that demand. Now the Green fascists have become a powerful weapon that the Soviets could use to topple the Kohl government and install a Red-Green coalition which would finalize Soviet hegemony over Germany. It is no surprise that members of the Green Party have intensified their harassment of the ELP and vowed to get its organizers "off the streets."