
The Chancellery

Schmidt fights back as national leader

Following widespread rumors in the international press—once again—that West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was depressed and thinking of resigning, the Chancellor has resurfaced to give numerous speeches and interviews aimed to counter the operations against him. Whereas his domestic and foreign enemies hope to keep him narrowly preoccupied with the difficulties in the Bonn governing coalition, in the Social Democratic Party, and in West Berlin's weakened government, Schmidt has refused to be immobilized in his foreign policy. The agreement he signed with France in early April for a joint loan from the OPEC countries to revitalize the high-technology industry of both countries is a historic first.

Even the German trade union confederation DGB, whose leaders are normally hostile to Schmidt's policies, have issued a statement praising the Franco-German arrangement as a needed measure to alleviate unemployment.

Despite the efforts of the Socialist International to force a break between Schmidt and President Reagan, the Chancellor has reiterated in every public statement his warm regard for the U.S. President and his eagerness for a successful visit to Washington May 20-23.

Schmidt has tried to reach over the heads of the squabbling party factions, special interest groups, kooks and zero-growthers who dominate the political scene and the news media, to mobilize the positive sense of nationhood of the ordinary German citizen. His State of the Nation speech to the Bundestag (parliament) April 9 was largely devoted to this theme, including the issue of relations with the German Democratic Republic (East Germany).

"We would make ourselves insecure, void of history and faceless, if we wanted to abandon the concept of nation. . . . Unity of a nation means a common historical past with events giving cause to be proud and events giving cause for shame. The term nation is simultaneously a claim for the future, a claim we make, but a claim that commits us. . . . There is no other way of doing something reasonable for the unity of the German nation

than to continue the policy of peace and détente, to pursue the re-establishment of the spiritual, cultural and economic unity of all of Europe."

This appeal to the nation as a whole is Schmidt's strongest argument against his enemies, as the leader who has done the most since Konrad Adenauer to restore to a defeated nation that sense of national pride which the British occupiers, in particularly, attempted to extirpate.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the chairman of the European Labor Party and a regular contributor to *EIR*, focused her own electoral campaign last fall in West Germany around the issue of republican national identity. She challenged the government to assert a sovereign foreign policy of peace through economic progress, and German high-technology exports for the development of the Third World. In television and radio appearances during the campaign she drew the attention of the population to the heritage of German humanism to which it can look with pride; the great dramas and poetry of Friedrich Schiller, the music of Beethoven and Mozart.

Schmidt's approach can succeed, provided it is combined with more forceful actions against Willy Brandt, Gerhard Baum, and the others who are out to destabilize his government.

Chancellor of the whole nation

In meetings of the executive committee of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) at the end of March, Schmidt blasted the leftists, the spokesmen for zero growth and deindustrialization against the interests of the party's working-class base. The party apparatus has become "dominated by teachers and students—not at all representative of the SPD base," he said. "If it comes to a choice between the population's concerns and the party's concerns, I as Chancellor must decide on behalf of the population," he said. A few days later, at a trade-union conference in West Berlin, Schmidt denounced the "greenies" who are taking away the jobs of working people and destroying the economy.

Then in an unusual interview April 4 with the Lutheran *Evangelische Kommentar*, Schmidt criticized the church for fostering youth unrest. Lutheran pastors are notorious for their collaboration with the "greenies" and terrorists, and 12 theologians from Göttingen signed a statement this week accusing the government of "looking like the worst dictatorships in Chile" because of its alleged mistreatment of the Baader-Meinhof terrorists. The Protestant church, Schmidt charged, has failed to educate youth so as to integrate them into society, and has encouraged "better red than dead" pacifistic beliefs among the population. No one who takes responsibility for the well-being of the Federal Republic as a whole can possibly take such a position, he said.