

Report from Bonn by George Gregory and Rainer Apel

Brandt backs 'Greens' against Schmidt

The Chancellor and his coalition have survived, but the conspiracy to oust him is still on the offensive.

Since West Germany's ruling coalition partners, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Free Democratic Party (FDP), reached an eleventh-hour compromise June 30 on the federal budget, preventing a break-up of the Bonn government, the left wing of the Social Democrats has surfaced publicly to demand an SPD alliance with the Green Party. Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, who opposes any such coalition with the pot-smoking, anti-nuclear and violence-prone Greens, has been unable or unwilling to silence these new demands.

The SPD left's promotion of the Greens will destabilize the Bonn coalition further, tending to propel FDP chairman Hans-Dietrich Genscher toward a break with Schmidt and a coalition with the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). Despite the urgings of anti-Schmidt forces in Washington and London (see Special Report, July 6), Genscher pulled back from splitting the coalition, fearful that it would mean suicide of the dwindling party. The next big test for the coalition will come Sept. 26 in the state of Hesse, where the FDP has decided to campaign in alliance with the Christian Democrats rather than with Schmidt's party.

The SPD left, under the protection of party chairman Willy Brandt, has every intention of toppling Schmidt and installing a CDU government in Bonn. They hope thereby to "strengthen" the

SPD—driving out all conservative, pro-Schmidt factions. If their strategy succeeds, the Federal Republic will be polarized between such a "green" fascist Opposition and a Christian Democratic government under incompetent Helmut Kohl (run from behind the scenes by Bavarian strongman Franz Josef Strauss).

The worsening of the economic crisis gives Schmidt less maneuvering room than ever before. Unemployment in the country is the highest since 1950, and is expected to top 2 million by the year's end. AEG-Telefunken, the nation's 13th-largest firm, is on the verge of bankruptcy, and the Bonn Cabinet is currently putting together a bailout package. The budget compromise which gave Schmidt a brief respite included, at the insistence of the FDP free marketeers, cuts in social services and unemployment insurance.

The overture toward the Greens was signaled by former Chancellor Willy Brandt, who declared in a speech in Munich July 4 that "many of the Greens have good intentions and sometimes also good proposals," and therefore that a coalition government with them after the 1984 federal elections should not be ruled out.

This line was picked up throughout the Federal Republic:

- In **Hamburg**, where the Greens made substantial electoral gains last month, the SPD and

Green Alternative List are meeting regularly to discuss the basis for an informal coalition to govern the city. No party or coalition now has a majority there.

- In **Hesse**, the scene of the crucial upcoming election, the pro-Schmidt wing of the party has been virtually silenced and no attacks against the Greens can be heard—in the state where thousands of Green-organized demonstrators rioted last fall.

- In **West Berlin**, SPD chairman Hans-Jochen Vogel rejected a call by the association of small businessmen to suspend from the city parliament all deputies of the Alternative List (the local Green affiliate). The AL had organized a violent demonstration against President Reagan in June.

- In the **Saarland**, SPD chief Oskar Lafontaine called for the SPD to open its doors to the Greens.

- In **Baden-Württemberg**, SPD chairman Ulrich Lang endorsed Brandt's pro-Green statement.

- In **Schleswig Holstein**, SPD executive committee member Egon Bahr advised the Hamburg SPD to try for a coalition with the Greens just a few hours after election returns came July 6 vote.

Chancellor Schmidt, in an interview published July 5 in *Der Spiegel* magazine, warned that anyone who votes for the FDP or the Greens in the Hesse elections is really voting to bring Strauss-crony Alfred Dregger into the governor's office. The left wing of Schmidt's party may have already achieved that. Unless SPD policy is quickly reversed by Schmidt and his supporters, demoralized voters cannot be expected to turn out to support the Chancellor's party.