

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### The food crisis caused by the IMF

*The Schiller Institute's rally in Bonn made the point about Africa's famine that was missed by the "Day for Africa."*

**K**icking off a worldwide series of rallies and parades, 500 supporters of the Schiller Institute gathered at the Kennedy Bridge in Bonn on Saturday, Jan. 26, and marched across the Rhine to the Münster Platz, the West German capital's central market square. They challenged Chancellor Helmut Kohl and U.S. President Reagan to take the lead in rapidly bringing about a new world economic order that can ensure the inalienable right of all people to economic development.

In a statement read at the Bonn rally and in 50 other cities around the world, Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche said, "We need a renaissance of the American Revolution." Mrs. LaRouche, who also was the West German European Labor Party's candidate for chancellors in the last elections, renewed her call for an "Indira Gandhi Memorial Summit Conference" of governments to put together a new international monetary system within the next three months.

Parade participants marched with two large brass bands, a color guard with flags of 15 nations, figures of the American Revolution and the Statue of Liberty, and carried large banners with quotes from Friedrich Schiller's poetry, calls for the inalienable rights of man, and demands for massive high-technology exports to the Third World. Children carried balloons and pictures of Mrs. Gandhi, alongside signs urging that German technology be used to develop the Third World—even if Henry Kissinger, West German Foreign Minister Genscher, or the Greens

strenuously object!

The rally made the point about the causes of the catastrophe in Africa that had been sidestepped in a nationwide mobilization three days earlier, when on Jan. 23, all of the West German media, parliaments, official institutions, and many private aid societies and charities held a "Day for Africa" in support of the millions of Africans hit by famine. Mayors, parliamentarians, the President, bishops, opera singers, and pop singers participated in the events, which called on citizens to give money for a special emergency aid program for the famine belts.

More than 100 million deutschemarks came in for immediate relief programs for Africa—an impressive amount, given the relatively puny European Community relief programs of 1-2 million deutschemarks. Yet not one speech by a prominent politician on the "Day for Africa" addressed the "conditionalities" of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which have imposed genocidal austerity on Africa and blocked the large infrastructure projects that could make Africa self-sustaining.

In the Bonn parliament, which held a special "Africa Debate" plenary session on Jan. 23, the IMF conditionalities were never mentioned. The dimension of the African famine was addressed in speeches like the one given by the vice-president of the Assembly, Mrs. Annemarie Renger, who warned that "150 million Africans are directly or indirectly threatened by famine and misery." But even Mrs.

Renger, one of the few moral persons in the parliament, overlooked the conditionalities. Nor did anyone address the question of human rights.

It was left to the Schiller Institute to create some momentum: The president of the German branch of the Institute, Renate Müller, intervened in the Africa Day rally in Hamburg with the institute's Declaration of the Inalienable Rights of Man, and Dr. Desmond Tutu, the 1984 Nobel Peace Prize winner, quickly signed it—pointedly ignoring the protests of the Social Democratic politicians who had invited him to honor their rally!

The Hamburg incident is telling: West Germany's political establishment—Social and Christian Democrats alike—doesn't like straight talk on Third World matters.

Straight talk was the hallmark of the Schiller Institute's Jan. 29 rally. There, the president of the Nigerian Students Organization in Germany, Mr. Rashid Alabi, told West German citizens, "I thank you very much for the 100 million deutschemarks which you contributed for African relief programs. But next time you give money, write on your check: 'This money is not for food, but for technology,' because that is what Africa needs. We Africans don't just need something to eat, we need technology and the infrastructure to produce food ourselves."

Seen against the dimension of the real requirements for securing food for all of Africa, the 100 million DM collected on Jan. 23 are just a drop on a hot stone. If the politicians in Bonn had some courage and got themselves together for a resolution calling for an end to the IMF conditionalities policy, Africa would be relieved of several billions of dollars of annual debt payments. The day this occurred would be a real "Day for Africa."