
West German elections

A dangerous advance by Red-Green allies

by Rainer Apel

Oskar Lafontaine, the leading ultra-left demagogue in the Social Democratic Party, who has declared he would like to see West Germany leave NATO and American soldiers and missiles leave Europe, has been elected prime minister of the state of Saarland, Federal Republic of Germany. The Social Democratic landslide victory in the state was the most dramatic outcome in the three state and municipal elections in that nation on March 10.

Lafontaine's victory and the results in West Berlin, where the Green-Alternative list won 11% in state elections the same day, mark a further step toward the creation of a "Red-Green" coalition between the ecological fascists of the Green Party and Moscow's stooges in the Willy Brandt-led left wing of the Social Democracy. This Red-Green alliance is making a bid to replace the ruling Christian Democratic Party in the government in Bonn, possibly as early as this spring.

In every case, the deepening economic crisis and heavy unemployment loomed large in the vote, as the fiasco of the Kohl government's "laissez-faire" approach has left the door wide open to Red-Green subversion.

- In Saarland, the Christian Democrats of low-profile state prime minister Werner Zeyer lost an average of 6.7% of their previous vote and 51 of a total of 52 districts. The Social Democrats (SPD) gained an absolute majority and will form the first Social Democratic government in the state in 30 years.

- In municipal voting in the state of Hesse, the Social Democrats campaigned with a pro-environmentalist program, and managed to take away 0.5-1.5% of the previous Green Party vote, also garnering Catholic "protest votes" against the economic performance of the Christian Democratic government in Bonn.

- The West Berlin state elections resulted in only slight losses for the Christian Democrats, but heavy losses for the SPD against gains for the Free Democrats and the Green-Alternative List. The latter profited from the fact that the national SPD party executive boycotted the campaign of their own slate leader, the more conservative Hans Apel. Apel, former defense minister under Helmut Schmidt, was undermined by the party left wing, which openly favors working with the Greens. In some precincts, the Green-Alternatives took 30-40% of the total vote, surpassing the Social

Democrats.

The defeat of Hans Apel in West Berlin helps Oskar Lafontaine and his mentor, Soviet agent-of-influence and ex-Chancellor Willy Brandt, to come on stage as the "Social Democrats of the future," "those who win."

Who is Oskar Lafontaine?

Lafontaine once told the French weekly *Le Point* he would prefer to live in Poland or Hungary under Soviet domination than defend West Germany against Soviet aggression with nuclear weapons and risk nuclear war. No wonder his victory was covered as a top news item on Radio Moscow after the election!

Lafontaine also fiercely opposes nuclear-power generation and big industrial projects, and propagates environmentalist policies as radical as those of the Green Party. Saarland has an official unemployment rate of 14.2%, in the industrial regions 17% or 18%; Lafontaine plans to give far-reaching powers to his nominee for environmental affairs minister, Jo Leinen, who is to get "ecology veto rights" on every section of the state's budget and every major industrial investment. There will be no manufacturing activity in the Saarland unless it be "non-damaging to nature." In environmentalist slang, this means the end of traditional industrial activity. Thus, Lafontaine attracted many ecologist votes and kept the Green Party out of the parliament.

But why was a man with that policy able to win an absolute majority of seats—including many votes from workers and even the unemployed? One reason is that, under the ruling Christian Democrats, the state's central industrial facility, the Arbed steel plant, collapsed and was forced to fire half of its workforce during the past four years. The Christian Democrats went the "post-industrial" route, which meant watching 10 workers lose their jobs to have one employed in the "new industries" such as electronics and computers. With steel, mining, and their supplier industries collapsing in the Saar, the state has become the country's poorhouse, and its fate has come to depend on the good will of the bankers to bail out the state and its million inhabitants.

Lafontaine attacked this kind of policy, but he did not make any pledges to create new jobs—he just promised to do what he could "to help stop the increase of unemployment." His record on that issue as mayor of the state capital, Saarbruecken, is poor, however: The official unemployment rate is at 17%, and it was kept that "low" only because of a labor-recycling swindle which puts workers from the welfare line on jobs for one year. The jobs are all "post-industrial"—public sector leaf-raking, social work, neighborhood counseling, and the like. Then, the same worker gets laid off again, but has gained a new claim on unemployment checks. After two years on the unemployment line, he would drop back into the welfare net with 30% less income, or get re-employed—for one year.