

## Report from Bonn by Volker Hassmann

### The Baden-Württemberg elections

*The March 20 vote in this south German state provides an opportunity to the Patriots to shape national politics.*

A major government crisis is likely in West Germany this summer, but the outcome is being shaped right now by the upcoming March 20 state elections in Baden-Württemberg.

The ruling Christian Democratic Party of West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, which has suffered increasing losses in every election since 1985, may be about to lose its absolute majority in the state government—even while its governor, Lothar Spaeth, is being touted as a political miracle-maker and the next chancellor of Germany!

Spaeth won pre-approval from the Soviets during a recent pilgrimage to Moscow, where he was certified as more willing to sell Germany to the Soviet Union than even the weak-hearted Chancellor Kohl. Current scenarios feature Spaeth stepping in some time after the summer to head a “grand coalition” with the Social Democratic Party, which would negotiate with Moscow for a “neutral” Germany that would function as a toolshop for the Soviet military machine.

Not much is standing in the way of this scheme—except a challenge to Spaeth’s Christian Democrats by the new party Patriots for Germany, which in only a few weeks has organized a movement of citizen-candidates all over the state. One hundred thirty people gathered at the Patriots regional party congress in early March; the party has filed candidates in 35 of the state’s 70 districts.

The utter inability of Spaeth and other slick politicians to deal with the shattering international economic crisis, or the rapid slide toward Soviet

domination signaled by the INF treaty, has left a wide open organizing situation for the Patriots.

The Patriots have been labeled as “the most curious” of the parties by the local press, according to party vice chairman F.W. Grunewald, a retired general in the Bundeswehr, “because we really care about people, and tell the truth about what is really going on.” A party poster lampoons Spaeth by depicting him pushing a shopping cart filled with industrial goods, and the motto, “Moscow sets the prices.”

Calling on her countrymen to fight for a new world economic order as demanded by Pope John Paul II in his most recent encyclical, Patriots founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche pointed out at the party congress that under the “post-industrial society” regime pursued by all “established” parties for the past two decades, West Germany has lost 2.5 million productive jobs in industry and agriculture since 1975. Moreover, the Kohl government has just agreed to European Community-imposed farm cuts that will take 50% of German agriculture out of production in the next 12 years.

Baden-Württemberg, touted as a “high-tech” success story by Spaeth’s friends, is not immune. The auto industry near Stuttgart is in full-blown crisis because of the fall of the U.S. dollar. Porsche and Audi have announced layoffs and short-time work; Daimler Benz is soon to follow. For every job lost in the auto industry, two jobs will vanish in the spare-parts industries. Mass layoffs have been announced also in the machine tool and electronics sectors.

Prospects for 1988 are dim. A recent study has forecast that the Stuttgart industrial heartland, which depends on exports for 50% of its revenues, will lose another 30,000 jobs by the year 2000. And, the CDU tries to calm voters with empty rhetoric on “stability” and “progress.”

Spaeth, who has consistently criticized the cabinet in Bonn, dominated by his own party, as “incompetent” and “leaderless,” endorses the plan for a supranational European central bank and proposes a “restructuring” to shrink European and German industry, beginning with cartelization in the high-tech sector and a reorientation of German exports to the East bloc. On his recent trip to Moscow, Spaeth was accompanied by a large delegation of Baden-Württemberg industrialists, who have opened up a series of “joint ventures” to beef up Marshal Ogarkov’s Soviet war economy. These efforts have confirmed Spaeth as the Politburo’s favorite for West German chancellor, according to the Russian weekly *Literaturnaya Gazeta*.

The Spaeth government has also announced that “the day is past when this was a farm state.” Laws drive farmers off the land on the pretext of protecting the ecology.

But three weeks of campaigning on the Patriots’ national farm emergency program, organized around slogans like “A Free Nation Needs Free Farmers,” or “Save Farmers—Stop Hunger—Marshall Plan For Africa Now,” is dominating politics across the farm belt.

“He who has courage and a good plan, can turn the ship around and win,” Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche stressed at the recent Patriots party congress. “We Patriots will do everything possible to turn the politicians toward implementation of a new world economic order.”