

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

The truth about Barschel—finally

An investigative committee is rehabilitating the former state governor eight years after his death.

Something spectacular happened in Kiel, the capital of the German state of Schleswig-Holstein, on Oct. 30, when the special investigation committee on the “Barschel Affair” released the results of more than two years of investigations on the case. The report, the full text of which will be published on Nov. 17, states that former Gov. Uwe Barschel, who was found dead in a Geneva hotel room on Oct. 11, 1987, had been the victim of a character assassination campaign during the months before his death.

The official line has been that Barschel committed suicide, although *EIR* has insisted that he must have been the victim of foul play.

The committee came to the conclusion that Christian Democrat Barschel was most likely trapped by his aide Reiner Pfeiffer, who wove a web of lies around Barschel, as the former faced elections for the state parliament in September 1987. During the entire period of his employment as Barschel’s aide, between January and early September 1987, Pfeiffer had close contact with the opposition Social Democrats, as well as with the weekly *Der Spiegel*, leaking inside information to the magazine and getting paid for it.

The committee thereby invalidated the report of the first investigation committee, which in 1988 came to the false conclusion that Barschel had been the author of a “dirty tricks” campaign against Social Democrat Björn Engholm, his main political adversary.

The conclusion of the committee’s work is positive, as it finally identifies the character assassination which dominated the election campaign in Schleswig-Holstein during the spring and summer of 1987. But the principal questions about the death of Barschel eight years ago remain unsolved. The committee confined its investigations to the relations between Pfeiffer and Barschel, Pfeiffer and the opposition, and the media.

The forensic side of the investigation, which is proceeding separately, can benefit from the parliamentary committee’s report, however, because considerable evidence indicating that Barschel was assassinated has been accumulated by the prosecutors. The phony “suicide” thesis was built upon the character assassination campaign against Barschel, which claimed that he had killed himself out of “despair” over his “bad reputation.”

An interesting lead into the background of Barschel’s death was provided on April 20, in a “Monitor” television special aired by Germany’s first national channel, which showed files from Moscow archives that proved that Barschel had been involved in secret arms deals with the KGB. The files show that he made contact with a special section of the Soviet Defense Ministry in 1984, possibly even as far back as 1979. According to sources cited by the broadcast, Barschel secretly transferred funds to Moscow to enable it to secretly purchase western high-tech

equipment that otherwise fell under embargo clauses. In return, and with the full consent of the West, the East sold arms, also secretly, to western clients among Arab states.

Presented with an advance copy of the “Monitor” report, Heinrich Wille, the chief prosecutor in the resumed Barschel investigation, said in Lübeck on April 19 that, indeed, “most of the leads we have in this case, support the thesis that Barschel was assassinated,” and that it could not be ruled out that the assassins may have been hired by arms-dealing networks in East and West.

This aspect leads straight into the early 1980s “arms-for-hostages” operations of George Bush, Maj. Gen. Richard Secord, and Lt. Col. Oliver North, many of which were carried out through networks of East German foreign intelligence, with the consent of the Soviets. The state of Schleswig-Holstein, which played a pivotal role in those dirty deals, borders on East Germany’s Baltic coastal region.

It seems that Barschel became an obstacle for those arms-peddling networks, because sabotage of airfield signals caused a plane crash which almost killed Barschel near Lübeck on the night of May 31, 1987. It is striking to observe that the media character assassination campaign against Barschel began the day after the plane crash.

Other crucial pieces of evidence are contained in a series of forensic medical tests carried out in the last eight years on Barschel’s corpse. In April, the latest of these tests found unmistakable traces of poisonous substances in the corpse, whose existence had not hitherto been noticed. This establishes with certainty, that the substances had been introduced into Barschel’s body after he had already lost consciousness, definitely ruling out the idea that he killed himself.