

German media campaign for establishment of new right-wing party

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18 August 2010

Last Friday, the *Tagesspiegel* published a commentary in which Norbert Bolz calls for the establishment of a “right-wing party of openly assertive conservatism”. Bolz is a professor of media studies at Berlin’s Technical University.

Bolz begins his call for a right-wing movement with a sharp critique of Chancellor Angela Merkel. She has “finally made a social democratic party out of the CDU [Christian Democratic Union]”, he writes, driving out important conservative thinkers such as the former CDU/CSU faction leader Friedrich Merz and Hesse state premier Roland Koch from leading CDU offices.

The new right supports the dismantling of the welfare state and the unrestricted right to exploitation. Bolz formulates this with the words: “The right is against the paternalism of the welfare state, for greater personal responsibility and the unequivocal protection of property.” Moreover, he calls for a “joyous patriotism and the leading role of Christian culture”. He stresses: “The right upholds the traditional family and a selective education system”.

The new right should break the “media power of the left” and no longer accept the “mental blockade” that had “created the ongoing struggle against the Nazis for the past fifty years”, Bolz continues. The “grotesque equation: conservative = reactionary = fascist” is used as an ideological cudgel to intimidate and to silence an openly assertive conservatism.

Professor Bolz’s call is part of a deliberate media campaign.

At the end of July, the Emnid research institute published the results of a poll commissioned by news magazine *Focus*. It claimed that 20 percent of respondents welcomed the founding of a new right-wing party. In press interviews, the head of the polling institute, Klaus-Peter Schöppner, said there were good

chances for the creation of a mainly Christian conservative party standing to the right of the CDU/CSU. “Paradoxically, the most loyal CDU/CSU voters are becoming non-voters in their droves” he said in an article in *Bild am Sonntag*. In another article, he even offered a name for the new right-wing party; it might be called, “Unity and Justice and Freedom”.

According to Schöppner, a new right-wing party stood the “best chances of establishing itself” and could win the services of politicians such as outgoing Hesse state premier Roland Koch, former CDU/CSU parliamentary faction leader Friedrich Merz and Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg (CSU). He also named Joachim Gauck as a possible founding member, the former East German civil rights activist and head of the Stasi documentary centre, who was nominated in May as a candidate for federal president by the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Greens.

Earlier this year, right-wing conservative CDU officials had published a “manifesto against the leftward trend”. Since then, they have been collecting signatures supporting such a turn to the right. The manifesto begins with the words, “With grave concern, the signatories register that with its ‘Berlin Declaration’ of 15 January 2010, the leadership of the CDU has apparently permanently turned its back on its roots and longstanding core voters, and wants to pursue the ‘turn to the left’.” The CDU should find its way back to its conservative Christian and free market roots, and thus regain the positions of [post-war CDU leaders] Konrad Adenauer and Ludwig Erhard.

The first signatories of the manifesto include Prince Ferdinand von Bismarck, great-grandson of the “Iron Chancellor” (who is also related to Stephanie Countess von Bismarck-Schönhausen, the wife of Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg), Johanna Gräfin

von Westphalia, chair of the anti-abortion foundation “Yes to life”, Professor Dr. Hubert Gindert, chair of the Forum of German Catholics and editor of the Catholic magazine *Der Fels*, Prof. Dr. Klaus Hornung, former president of the right-wing Weikersheim study centre, and Martin Lohmann, a publicist and chair of the “Right to life federation”, a lawyers’ organisation against abortion.

The campaign to establish a right-wing party is directly linked to the breakup of the CDU/CSU as a “peoples’ party”. Even more so than the SPD, the CDU and CSU were the embodiment of a form of corporatism that constituted the essence of “Rhineland capitalism” during the post-war period. It united the most varied social groupings and interests under one roof: entrepreneurs, tradesmen, farmers, civil servants and workers, Catholics and Protestants, social reformers and economic liberals.

Faced with the present economic crisis and the growth of social tensions together with the growing polarization between rich and poor, political formations based on the past policy of social partnership are now breaking apart.

At the same time the right wing realise that they currently have only limited political influence. Despite strong financial backing, right-wing, clerical initiatives such as the small “People’s Movement for North Rhine-Westphalia” gained little support in the last elections.

Therefore the right-wing strategists are looking not towards tomorrow, but the day after tomorrow. They expect that a “leftwing government” currently advocated by sections of the ruling elite will only be a brief political interlude. For their part the SPD, Greens and the Left Party stress at every opportunity that they will enforce the social cuts demanded by the banks and employers’ associations more consistently than the Merkel government has done in the past.

The political frustration that would be unleashed by the right-wing policies of a so-called “left government” would then create the political basis for the rise of a right-wing party.

Such considerations and plans could bear fruit—this is demonstrated by political developments in Britain, Hungary and the Netherlands. In these countries, right-wing conservative parties—in Budapest and The Hague even openly fascist parties—have come to power, able to divert the anger, outrage and despair of sections of the

population into right-wing channels.

The claim by officials of the Left Party and the trade unions that the right-wing offensive can be stopped by a “unity against the right”, i.e., by establishing a political movement in support of the Left Party and the SPD, is thoroughly false; the calculations by the right-wing already include the prospect of a left government for a temporary period. Such a formation, moreover, would be aimed at preventing the working class from advancing its own solution to the capitalist crisis.

The spectre of the right and far right can only be stopped by the independent political action of the working class, on the basis of an international socialist programme, aimed at breaking the power of the banks and the financial aristocracy and establishing a workers’ government.



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