

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Washington courts the Socialists

The red-green alliance in the Federal Republic of Germany offers cooperation with the Bush-Baker team.

Willy Brandt's Socialist International is offering to play a prominent role in the redefinition of U.S. foreign policy under President Bush, and the new U.S. administration seems committed to accept this offer.

For the fourth time in six weeks, a delegation of senior West German Social Democratic Party (SPD) officials got the red-carpet treatment in Washington, D.C.

First, Egon Bahr, architect of the SPD's *Ostpolitik*, conferred with U.S. National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft and Senators Sam Nunn and Les Aspin on East-West and European issues at the end of February. Then, in the first week in March, Socialist International chairman Willy Brandt met with Scowcroft to convey his support for the new Brady Plan for Third World debt management.

SPD chairman Hans-Jochen Vogel was received by the President and by Secretary of State James Baker, Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan, Special Trade Representative Carla Hills, and Defense Secretary Richard Cheney in the first week of April. Vogel was generally introduced as the "potential next chancellor of West Germany"—whether as head of a coalition with the Greens, or the Liberals, or even a "Grand Coalition" with the Christian Democrats.

In mid-April, the newly elected SPD mayor of Berlin and head of a radical "red-green" coalition with the Green party, Walter Momper, arrived in Washington to present his policy to Bush, Baker, Ambassador to Bonn Vernon Walters, Senators Claiborne Pell and Richard Lugar, and Con-

gresswoman Pat Schroeder.

All four delegations were received in a way that can only be read as a slap in the face to Bonn Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who is considered to be on his way out.

The Bush administration seems to find the Social Democrats more useful in its Kissingerite policy of accommodation with the East, than Kohl's Christian Democrats. The scene reminds one of the early weeks of 1969, when the U.S. Establishment decided to have a Social Democrat as their next chancellor in Bonn—and threw their backing behind Willy Brandt.

Especially in the talks Vogel had with U.S. administration officials, the "new wave" became visible. The meetings had the character of concrete planning sessions, rather than distanced diplomatic encounters. Vogel stated support for the Brady Plan for the "consolidation of Third World debt" and discussed an equivalent of the plan for economic aid to Eastern Europe. He expressed support for the respective Kissinger proposals for European disarmament, on the condition that "the Europeans" (meaning the Socialist International and the SPD) be partners in this scheme.

Vogel declared his full backing for the new Bush-Baker approach on Central America and the Caribbean, which he said was "noteworthy because of its emphasis on diplomatic means of solving conflict . . . much different from Reagan's militaristic approach before." He said nothing about U.S. efforts to overthrow Panama's Gen. Manuel Noriega.

Returning these favors from Vo-

gel, Baker signaled "genuine interest" in utilizing SPD "channels of influence into Central America." He welcomed the work of German SPD member Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski, who has been touring the region repeatedly in the past months as a trouble-shooter for the Socialist International. Wischnewski, who maintains very close contacts with the Nicaraguan junta, has been in secret contact with the United States through Miami before, and was, among other secret missions, also involved in shuttle diplomacy between Washington and Panama's Noriega.

Wischnewski will soon receive an official invitation to give a detailed report to Baker, at a meeting at the State Department. This will include discussion of Socialist International contacts with several key governments of Ibero-America, like Mexico, Venezuela, Argentina, Peru, and Brazil—all of which are important in the political battle over Third World debt. An unsavory partnership between the Socialist International and the Anglo-American Establishment in "settling Ibero-American affairs" is shaping up. This has a tradition: It was Willy Brandt and Robert McNamara who set up the North-South Commission ("Brandt Commission") in 1977.

Concerning European affairs and the "New Yalta," the Bush-Baker team and the Socialist International are in basic agreement on arms control, U.S. military disengagement from Western Europe, on a post-nuclear strategy for NATO in Europe, and special aid initiatives to Poland and Hungary (in consultation with Moscow).

The German Social Democrats also agree with the Bush team on the principle of strict non-proliferation of advanced technology in the chemical and nuclear sectors, from Germany to the Third World.