

Interview: Renate Rumpf



Germany's revolution has just begun

Renate Rumpf of West Germany is an activist with the Schiller Institute and the Patriots for Germany party, who has been active since the fall of the Berlin Wall last November in political organizing in the East.

EIR: What have you been doing there, since the Wall came down?

Rumpf: When East Germans were given permission to come to the West, the Patriots for Germany was the first institution to organize at the borders and greet those coming over from East Germany with a leaflet, which was written by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, expressing the hope for rapid moves toward German unity. Since then, we have participated in thousands of demonstrations.

Then at Christmas time, the decision was made which allowed West Germans to go across the border without a visa. That allowed us to become even more active. Before that, we held over 20 meetings near the border, in West German cities. And the East Germans could come by the carload. The rooms were packed. No one came alone, since before no one had been able to hold any kind of public meeting, except in the churches. Everything was controlled by the Stasi secret police. You would have ended up in jail if you had attended such a meeting. That was one of the things that made the churches the most important part of the revolution.

People were so glad that they could come to the West and sit down and just say what they think. Sometimes they found it hard to articulate their thoughts, because they had never done it before. If you can't speak what you think for a long time, then it becomes a problem even to think of what you can't speak. Therefore, it was so important for them to start to think again, about what has been going on there all these years.

EIR: Were other political parties from the West holding such meetings?

Rumpf: No, we were the only ones, the Schiller Institute was the first to hold such meetings.

We briefed people on our perspective for the revolution-

ary situation, and presented the kind of reforms and programs which are needed. And we attacked the communists very hard.

EIR: What was the significance of the election on March 18?

Rumpf: We were very happy that the communist SED/PDS got such a slap in the face, that the Alliance won the election. The Social Democrats did badly, because people there are reacting strongly against words like "socialism," "communism." Anything that has to do with socialism, they hate. But the Social Democrats in East Germany are not all bad; they have taken the first opportunity of their lives to become a member of a political party. Many of them understand quite clearly the need to mobilize against the communists; they are quite different than the SPD in the West, in this respect. People are looking around to see what is available, to determine what they stand for. They may join the SPD and then later join another party—not because they are opportunists, but because they are just beginning to think politically.

One representative of the Schiller Institute in Sweden, Michael Ericson, addressed an election rally near Gera, and thanked the East Germans for "having been able, with your demonstrations, also to overthrow the hated socialist government of Sweden."

EIR: The press in the United States says that the East Germans are worried about German reunification proceeding too fast. Is this true?

Rumpf: Of course it is not true, otherwise you would not have so many people continuing to come to the West every day. People voted for rapid German unity; they do not fear it. It is the U.S. government and Maggie Thatcher in Britain that are trying to incite others to fear it.

EIR: Did the election campaign slow down the revolutionary process that was under way in November and December? Was there a demoralization in the face of the onslaught of West German politicking?

Rumpf: Not really. The next election will be on May 6, a municipal election. All the SED mayors and city parliaments are still in power, so the election campaign has not stopped. The first battle is over, but it is only the first step in a whole process.

I do not see a slowing of the revolutionary process, or a demoralization. The Alliance won, and people are still mobilizing. Until last Sunday, the demonstrations in Leipzig continued. Some demonstrations stopped when the election rallies intervened. Certainly this gave people a flavor of how politics works in the West. But all of the East German participants will tell you that they could not have carried off the election campaign by themselves, because they didn't know how. They voted for the CDU because of Chancellor Kohl's 10-point program for German unity. Without the Western

parties' participation, it would have been a great problem for them.

The population has had the chance to learn, through this election campaign. Especially those who were political candidates for the first time in their lives—simple people, some from the churches. They say, "I never thought that I would be political, but somebody has to do something." There are not masses who will take responsibility for the political process, but there are simple people, normal people who have started to think in the right way.

The key issue is the cultural treasures and values which some people have kept in their hearts throughout the 40 years of communism. If you travel now in the G.D.R., you find what Friedrich Schiller described in his letters. That history is still there; very little has changed. Weimar, Jena—the cities, the buildings where Schiller lived and worked—it's all still there. The SED tried to destroy that cultural heritage, to subvert it for their own purposes, but still people are proud that Schiller came from there, along with other people of the Weimar Classic period. That has given them a kind of strength.

And don't forget the churches. The Protestant Church there is not the same as the Protestant Church in West Germany. It was they who organized the whole ferment, they were in many cases the leaders of the revolution.

In heavily working-class areas, it was not the SED that won in the elections, but the Alliance. People there are deeply concerned about the economy.

EIR: What are the most important problems to be solved, and what is the Schiller Institute's perspective on how to solve them?

Rumpf: Lyndon LaRouche's program for an industrial triangle in Europe, from Paris to Berlin to Vienna, must be realized. Also the cultural program for the German population, which Helga Zepp-LaRouche wrote, must be carried out.

During the election campaign, we circulated 250,000 election "extras" calling for support of the Alliance. The papers included a box on the situation of Lyndon LaRouche in the United States, as well as a summary of our economic and cultural programs. We also distributed 50,000 copies of LaRouche's program for the industrial triangle. Wherever we went, people would ask for it. Several hundreds of thousands of leaflets went out—every week, Helga Zepp-LaRouche wrote a new leaflet, addressing the current situation.

Also very important was the intervention of Rev. James Cokley [a black American leader of the Schiller Institute who addressed a rally of 50,000 people in Leipzig]. He was the first American who went there. After his speech, people came to embrace him and thank him for his support and encouragement. As Schiller says in many locations, you have to continuously fight for a high conception of freedom. That

was the message that Reverend Cokley brought to the people of Leipzig.

The two key issues are the economy and the cultural issues. This is what the LaRouches have addressed, and this is what we are fighting for.

Documentation

German unity seen as 'the logic of history'

In the aftermath of the East German elections, the press in the United States and Great Britain continues to scream about the presumed "dangers" of German reunification; but continental European leaders and others are taking the contrary view, as the following examples show.

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl spoke of a "one-time historic chance to change the face of Europe" and create an "all-European economic zone," in his opening address before representatives of the 35 member nations of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in Bonn on March 19. The conference, sponsored by the Bonn ministry of economics, was convened to discuss monetary cooperation, joint investments, and economic projects.

Kohl said that the election result in East Germany created stable political conditions at the heart of Europe, from which all Europeans should profit. He declared that German unity means strengthening of the cause of integration in all of Europe, and provides a chance of overcoming the economic and military blocs of the past that divided Europe in two.

Kohl proposed a review of the CoCom rules on banning transfer of high technology to the East; the bans should be phased out in tandem with visible progress in the arms control talks, he said. The existing military blocs will be overcome, hopefully before the next century begins, by a new security system involving all states of Europe, Kohl argued. This new system could be prepared by two institutions which Kohl proposed, to monitor the arms control process and coordinate confidence-building measures.

French President François Mitterrand, speaking after a meeting in Paris with **Czechoslovak President Vaclav Havel** on March 20, called German unification "the logic of history." Havel told the French that the Czechs are not afraid of German reunification, that they welcome the achievements of the peaceful revolution in East Germany. Havel endorsed Mitterrand's proposal for an all-European federation as the