

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Germany launches anti-war initiatives

Across Germany's entire political party spectrum, people are leaving no stone unturned in order to break the Anglo-American war drive.

Old international law as well as Christian tradition knew the term of *bellum justum*, a war that is just and therefore morally justified. This does not apply to the war plan of the United States. . . . For Bush, Syria is an ally against Iraq, and to achieve that, he sacrifices Lebanon to the Syrian dictator Assad. But in so doing, Bush has lost the moral claim to launch a just war for the liberation of Kuwait."

This was a passage in an article published Nov. 13 by the *Deutsche Tagespost*, the leading conservative Catholic newspaper in Germany. Author Harald Vocke continued his attack on the Bush policy, writing: "There is no duty to have solidarity with an America that is preparing an aggressive war on Iraq with increasing commitment . . . nor even—if it comes to that—with belligerent resolutions of the United Nations. . . . The term *solidarity*, so important in Christian ethics, is misused for the preparation of war."

Coming from the arch-conservative spectrum of politics, this article marks a growing anti-war mood in Germany, with numerous articles, statements, and initiatives coming from the left against a Gulf war.

Leftists, peaceniks, and anti-war groups from the churches that overslept during the first three months after the outbreak of the Gulf crisis, have finally launched a campaign building for big protest rallies in Stuttgart (Nov. 17) and Bonn (Nov. 24) that would be run under the slogan, "Stop the war in the Gulf! No blood for oil!"

At the parliamentary level, the op-

position Social Democrats (SPD) have launched a motion for an emergency session of the Parliament on the Gulf crisis, on Nov. 15. It was initiated by two senior members of the left-wing current in the SPD, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul and Herrmann Scheer. In a Nov. 11 radio interview, Scheer harshly attacked the "servile loyalty" of the Bonn government vis-à-vis the Bush administration, demanding that German logistical support for the U.S. Gulf expedition force be halted.

Scheer also authored a declaration warning that the military buildup of Western countries at the Gulf had reached a level that "increasingly makes the sand burn beneath their feet and is driving them toward a military solution."

Scheer recommended that the United Nations take "full or partial control" of the U.S. intervention force, thereby establishing a peacekeeping force run by the U.N. Military Council. This, he said, would help to "contain the danger that the factor of a national loss of face, or domestic policy considerations could determine considerations for or against a war."

As for the Social Democratic side of the campaign, the trip of former SPD party chairman and former chancellor Willy Brandt to Baghdad on Nov. 8 was a catalyst. After initial resistance from the Bonn government, it stiffened somewhat against U.S. pressure, Brandt was able to conduct his peace-probing mission with the open consent and tacit support of the Foreign Ministry, which covered the

cost of his trip.

One may not agree with Brandt for many justified reasons, but what he had to say on Iraq and the potential of war-avoidance deserves attention—the more so, since he had discussed it with critics of Bush during his U.S. tour the first week of November. The "Brandt Plan" was discussed with Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi leaders, but also with PLO leader Yasser Arafat in Baghdad. Calling for the unconditional release of all foreign hostages in Iraq and Kuwait, the plan involves:

- a timetable for the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait;

- an internationally controlled status for Kuwait—not a simple return to the situation before the Iraqi invasion ("the Emir shall stay somewhere else," Brandt said), but a combination of Kuwaiti sovereignty with an Iraqi share, guaranteed by a "third authority" such as the United Nations;

- a plebiscite of the Kuwaiti population on the form of government and state they want to have;

- settling territorial claims of Iraq on Bubiyan and other islands off the coast that would broaden Iraqi access to the Gulf sealanes; and

- settling compensation claims for losses Iraq suffered by the illegal Kuwaiti exploitation of the Rumaila oil fields, before the August intervention.

The "Brandt Plan" is certainly not a worked-out scheme for building a structure for lasting peace in the Middle East region; rather it aims at immediate avoidance of war; the last point of the plan, however, does introduce an aspect that goes beyond war-avoidance initiatives, namely, establishing a new type of oil consortium to avoid oil price dictates that have been imposed before, by the small oil-producing states over the big oil producer Iraq.