

lies. His conclusion was that we must become “saints,” and “professional saints” at that; no abstract, esoteric figures, but “full-blooded saints,” so to speak, like Mother Teresa.

The essence of both speeches was: Stop the hypocrisy; real life demands real answers to real problems! And if the Church is not able to provide these answers, the Church is finished.

The helplessness of the Church, unfortunately, became visible during the discussion of unemployment, on the second day of the conference. It is especially in the cultural realm, that the rapid, dangerous “re-evaluation” inside Polish society is showing itself. In a private discussion, one participant related to me a recent event in the city of Katowice: The director of the biggest concert hall in this city, which is right in the middle of Poland’s industrial belt in the South, had refused to sign a contract for a rock concert with the American rock band “Marilyn Manson,” because the group quite openly practices satanic rituals. Thereupon, the liberal and post-communist media had launched a witch-hunt against him, accusing him of going back to the old times when art was censored, and saying that he was trying to create an index of forbidden works of art, and so on. Finally, he was accused of sticking to the archaic, totally outmoded Christianity! Naturally, we know about such tendencies here in the West, where truth and human dignity are neglected under the guise of “liberalism”—but in an, at least so far, thoroughly Catholic country such as Poland, this was all shocking. Clearly, the Church is being pushed onto the defensive in Poland.

Therefore, it is all the more important, that Catholic circles become interested in the strategic world picture. With this aim in mind, the Polish Catholic Social Association (PZKS) had organized a meeting, during the first evening of the conference of laymen, where the Schiller Institute’s Grégoire Mukengechay spoke on the theme “Africa: Between Debt and AIDS.” Mukengechay, who was born and raised in the Central African country of the Congo, had studied in Poland in the 1960s, and speaks Polish fluently. He gave a very vivid report on the consequences of the International Monetary Fund policy of “globalization” and neo-liberal “free trade” in Africa. He demonstrated the dramatic indebtedness and the consequent disastrous collapse of the health system, in which the AIDS epidemic has taken on threatening dimensions. Catholics from Poland and Belarus passionately debated with him about the solution to this African tragedy. It became clear once again, that “African conditions” are really not so far away from us, if we don’t change economic policy on a global scale.

With that, we come back to the beginning: Poland is at a turning point, on the road to a severe crisis, after it has slavishly fulfilled all the brutal dictates of the Anglo-American financial elite for ten years. The most clever people in the country now see a unique chance to use the present vacuum in the United States, to finally act politically in a sovereign manner.

## Neo-Nazi Witch-Hunt Implodes in Germany

by Rainer Apel

A sovereign nation needs an elite that is, first of all, sovereign in its views and actions. This requires that the elite, the political establishment, deal with real problems, especially economic and social ones. But, the elite of Germany is doing almost the exact opposite. In an attempt to escape real problems, it is constructing virtual ones with which it can “deal,” and thereby deflect from the ugly reality of the economic depression.

### A Hysterical Response

But neither has this approach worked well, nor have the real problems gone away, and the German establishment’s response has been hysterical. Increasingly, scapegoats are being looked for, to blame them for the troubles that have become apparent.

The one big challenge to the German elite as a whole, namely, the need to find a policy to restore economic and monetary sovereignty for Germany, as the first step toward restoring such sovereignty also for the the rest of Europe, is being circumvented. And what is being circumvented at the same time, is the urgency of replacing the disastrous Social Democratic Party (SPD)-Green coalition with a Grand Coalition of the SPD and Christian Democratic Union/Christian Socialist Union (CDU-CSU), which would have the big majority in the national legislature that is required for introducing emergency measures to restore political control of the credit system, mobilize industrial production, and create several hundred thousand jobs in a short period of time.

This is what a clear majority of citizens and voters would prefer—and this is what the spin doctors, especially among the governing Social Democrats, want to sabotage. Their response to the threat of a new Grand Coalition has been a black propaganda campaign that is portraying the opposition Christian Democrats as right-wing extremists with whom no coalition were possible in any case.

Reality has it, however, that on numerous issues, the SPD is much more right-wing, and pro-monetarist, than the CDU-CSU, which implies that the propaganda campaign is not going that well. In a desperate flight-forward, the Social Democratic spin doctors have decided to launch a witch-hunt against “right-wing-extremist violence,” apparently hoping

that the mass hysteria created by that, will smother in the cradle all efforts to debate political and economic alternatives.

What has consequently developed in Germany, with the active assistance of the mass media, is a political climate that strikingly resembles what Americans went through during the era of McCarthyism 50 years ago. Almost daily, a pretext is created to justify, and even broaden the propaganda campaign against the alleged “neo-Nazi threat.” But there are big risks involved in this approach, and the so-called “Sebnitz Affair,” which haunted Germany for about a week in late November, has illustrated that.

### **The Sebnitz Affair Erupts**

Allegations by a mother in the city of Sebnitz, in Saxony, that her six-year-old son Joseph, who drowned in a public swimming pool in July 1997, was “drowned by neo-Nazis,” were taken up and amplified for a broad, national media campaign, led by the nation’s largest tabloid, *Bildzeitung*. On Nov. 23, *Bildzeitung* published a banner headline, “Neo-Nazis Drown Child.” The child was the son of an Iraqi father and a German mother, and the scandal-mongers leapt to the conclusion that the death was a racially motivated murder. With only a few publications remaining skeptical, the broad majority of the German media joined the campaign, adding other fantastically sounding aspects to the story, including alleged eyewitness testimony that the boy, shortly before his death, was tortured by those “neo-Nazis” with electric-shocks and “death drugs.”

The triggering issue in all of this, was “expertise” compiled by the Criminological Institute of Lower Saxony in 1999, upon the request of the mother of the drowned boy, after police investigations into the case had been closed in late 1998 because no evidence of murder had been found.

The Institute’s assessment had declared that eyewitness testimony collected from 15 individuals by the mother, incriminating three Sebnitz youths as the alleged murderers, justified reopening the case. Two of the three incriminated youths were arrested on Nov. 21. A third youth was arrested two days later.

For four days, on Nov. 23-26, the case of “Joseph” and his alleged “neo-Nazi murderers” dominated news headlines in Germany, and Chancellor and SPD chairman Gerhard Schröder himself intervened, receiving the mother of the drowned boy, a member of the SPD, at party headquarters in Berlin on Nov. 27, to “express solidarity of the SPD party chairman with an SPD member who is threatened by neo-Nazis.”

The whole charade, however, collapsed only hours later, when Saxony’s police revealed at a press conference in Dresden, that the three arrested youths had to be released because 1) none of the “eyewitnesses” had been able to identify them, in contrast to their testimony which had explicitly named them; 2) none of the three youths had any

relation to the neo-Nazi milieu; 3) at least one “eyewitness” confessed to the police that, in reality, he had not seen anything of the kind that was listed in the testimony report compiled by the drowned boy’s mother, but that he had lied.

Coming under attack by the Saxony state government for his role in the “expertise” which his criminological institute had compiled, the director of the institute, Christian Pfeiffer, retracted the report, declaring that it was not official, that he had nothing to with it, and that a member of the institute’s staff had compiled it as “a private initiative to help a crying mother.”

### **The Media Exposed**

The affair had turned into a “Waterloo for the media,” a devastating blow against the media’s reputation, which Hans Werner Kitz, editor-in-chief of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, publicly acknowledged, when he confessed that, “in Sebnitz, nearly everybody—ourselves included—was caught up by hysteria, which was even more incited by institutions of the state.”

Apart from exposing the media and their role, the scandal has also dealt a big blow against the propaganda campaign as a whole, because the Sebnitz Affair has been the third major flop of the spin doctors: Neither in the shrapnel bombing incident that wounded six immigrant Jews in Düsseldorf in July, and sparked the entire propaganda campaign, nor in a minor arson incident at the Jewish Synagogue in Düsseldorf, in September, have intense police investigations produced any evidence of neo-Nazi or right-wing-extremist involvement.

The key protagonists of the propaganda campaign, notably Chancellor Schröder, who used the second Düsseldorf incident as a pretext to proclaim a nationwide “Uprising of Decent Citizens” against the alleged “threat of neo-Nazi violence,” are fairly discredited now, in the wake of the Sebnitz Affair. Decent citizens are shocked at the indecent conduct of many of their leading politicians, including the Chancellor himself.

### **And Worse**

While all these propaganda campaigns are going on, nothing is being done against the *real* neo-Nazis, a marginal conglomerate of groups that are responsible for numerous acts of racist violence. Nothing is being done against the spread of youth violence, in general, of which the neo-Nazi phenomenon is but one aspect—and not even the most dangerous one. Video games, the access to hate propaganda on the Internet, the spread of mind-altering drugs and of hate-promoting rock and heavy metal music—against all that, nothing is being done in Germany by a government which is also shrugging its shoulders, as has been the case since early September, as hundreds of billions of German marks evaporate in the ongoing worldwide financial collapse, caused, in part, by aggressive stock market speculation.