

war-danger. This is the danger which came to the surface during the period since the outbreak of the international monetary crises of 1997 and 1998.

The failed responses since then, of all relevant governments, including the government and leading political parties of the U.S.A., set the stage for the pattern of spreading and worsening global economic and strategic catastrophes which has unfurled itself like a pandemic, around more and more of the world, since the January 2001 inauguration of President George W. Bush, Jr. That Bush Administration did not cause the disease; the failure of Bush was the leading product of that global pandemic which had already been set into motion under the reign of that President's predecessors. It is not a U.S.A. epidemic. As the recent European Union elections reflect this, it is a global pandemic which has now put western and central Europe into its charnel house.

The expedient internal compromises which socialist and other major political parties of the world had cultivated during the pre-1997 period, could no longer be maintained under those conditions of accelerating strategic military and economic crises which have wracked the world since the close of 1996. The achievements of those parties, prior to 1997, have been exposed as a euphoric delusion. The rise and fall of the "Red-Green" coalition government of Chancellor Schröder, is but one among many cases of what had become such an unworkable, attempted political compromise with onrushing destiny, under what had been already an acceleration of rapidly changing conditions for the worse.

Under such a condition of systemic spread of global existential crisis, there is no more dangerous idiocy in politics,

than to attempt to define politics in terms of the "left," "right," and "center" seating arrangements among, or within political parties. For any literate student of history, there are two leading currents of axiomatically distinct political thought among the political systems of modern, globally extended European civilization, neither of which are either "left," nor "right," nor "center." The only important, enduring, and axiomatic difference in modern European political culture, is between the Classical humanists and the sundry, opposing varieties of materialists. The implications of this are of fundamental importance for the class of problems to which the Koschnick interview refers. I explain this crucially important distinction as follows.

In Europe, one of the two mutually opposing currents whose intersection had effected the historical development of both the European continental social-democracy and the U.S. political-party system, was the same Classical humanist current which had been associated with the radiated 18th-Century influence of such as Leibniz, J.S. Bach, Abraham Kästner, Gotthold Lessing, Moses Mendelssohn, Friedrich Schiller, and the brothers Wilhelm and Alexander von Humboldt.

The opposition to the Classical humanist current from within, notably, the socialist parties of continental Europe, was the same, self-styled "materialist" current to which most of the world's Communist parties adhered, at least on their principal official records.

What often bounded these two opposing socialist currents into a single, so-called "left-wing" party of variously meliorist or revolutionary disposition, was a commitment to unprin-

What Koschnick Said

Hans Koschnick's lengthy interview with in the leading German daily *Die Welt* appeared on June 23. Koschnick, 75, is a former deputy chairman of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD), a former mayor of the city of Bremen, and one of the "grand old men" of the SPD. During the 1990s, Koschnick was European Union Administrator for the city of Mostar, in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Koschnick told *Die Welt* that the SPD under Gerhard Schröder had adopted a paradigm of economic-social policies which has now come to a complete dead-end. One can already rule out that the SPD will be re-elected to government, in the next national elections in 2006, and the party will be relegated to the opposition for some time after that, Koschnick said.

The party elder statesman said that a fundamental policy shift is required for the SPD, terminating the current

"hand-to-mouth" policies, "day-to-day" politics, or appeals to short-term populism. Running after "the hedonistic new middle class, as Schröder did in 1998, has been a failure." Schröder ignored the SPD's party base and the broader population, which may accept temporary sacrifice, but only if they know why, and for what. The population, said Koschnick, needs a perspective, and the party needs to show "the intention to change something about this society."

What is required, he insisted, is no mere reform of the party's structures, but a fundamental new idea, "a new vision of society"; but the latest European Parliament elections have shown that the Social Democrats had "no concept whatsoever, not the faintest approximation of an idea." Such an idea will, however, not come from the cabinet table of Chancellor Schröder or "expert commissions," Koschnick said. "Only such parties have a future, that have clear-cut values, a clear-cut message of how society has to be shaped in the future."