

# Rallying for the immigrants

By K. V. Krishnaswamy

**BERLIN:** Does the violence and the activities of right extremist groups in Germany presage a return to the nightmare era of the Thirties and Forties of the last century? An emphatic "no" must certainly be the answer. But recent political signals, particularly the utterances of Ms. Friedrich Merz, a conservative who leads the Christian Democratic Party in Parliament, have not helped matters.

Ms. Merz' reference to a Leitkultur or German leading culture had an ominous ring, coming from a leading light of the former

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ruling party. There was no clear explanation of what she meant when she said during an interview to a leading daily in the context of assimilating immigrants that "foreigners" should adapt to a German "leading culture".

"We have a problem integrating some of the foreigners in Germany and we should not exacerbate that problem by more immigration," Ms. Merz said in that bombshell interview, and went on to argue that there was need for a law on "immigration and integration."

Ms. Merz' party chief and prospective Chancellor disowned the remarks and from other reactions as well, it was obvious that the immigrants, an increasing target of

the ultra right, are not without friends.

At the office of a counselling bureau for foreigners in Berlin, help seekers queue up long before the doors open in the morning, much like visa applicants in front of American consulates in India. Though it is a government-appointed centre, the office of the Commissioner of Foreigners' Affairs of the Berlin Senate appears keen on guarding its freedom of action. The posters that greet you in the main reception hall inside give you some idea of the nationalities of those seeking assistance. Most of the immigrants are third world citizens and many of them have had a taste of the tough, often unwarranted harsh side of the German law enforcement agencies.

The counselling bureau was set up with the declared aim of creating "a cosmopolitan, tolerant and liberal" Berlin, with a working group "for the promotion of non-violent, multicultural understanding". "We help the immigrants in all ways. We try to help them secure the basic needs and in the larger sense assist them integrate themselves into society," said Ms. Elke Pohl at the bureau. Her use of the term "non-German Berliner" at first sounded odd but then as we listened to her it was clear that she was talking about a large group of people still to get integrated in this former imperial cap-



**Immigrants, many from north Africa, stage a protest in front of the offices of the Interior Ministry in Berlin.**

ital being restored to its majesty and grandeur.

Germany needs to keep up its level of immigration if only to ensure that society remained at its current level of age. "It is quite an old society," Ms. Pohl said referring to the fact that Germany's dependence on foreign labour has only increased as the population has kept at stagnant levels. According to one reliable estimate, the country needs 200,000 to 250,000 new immigrants every year to fill its labour ranks.

Immigrants form about nine per cent of the population in the capital, more than two thirds of them Turks of second and third generation who have been the

hailing from Bangalore, who has been here for a quarter century, has brought a number of compatriots to live and work in Berlin, she said in a hesitant disused Tamil.

Integrating into German society continues to be an obstacle race for the immigrants. Turkish families for example have lived in Berlin for 30 years and more without worthwhile contact with the mainstream of the population and so are not conversant in the German language. This failure — or inability — is proving to be a major drawback since knowledge of German is one of the criteria for obtaining German citizenship. The state provides assistance of sorts for the immigrants to learn the language but without opportunities for genuine assimilation such help has proved to be of no avail.

There was also, among the common people, a total lack of awareness of the need for immigrant labour to sustain the current level of progress. Most seemed blissfully unaware of the bold initiative through the green card scheme launched by the Government this summer to try and attract immigrant talent.

At the official level, there is keenness to know the type of immigrants who are responding to the scheme and their quality. The response from India has not been encouraging yet.

main victims of much harassment and acts of violence by right-wing extremist gangs like the Skinheads. Of the rest, east Europeans form the bulk, mostly from across the border in Poland and Hungary. A small percentage of Africans — apparently those that had been invited for ideological considerations by the former East German regime — and Asians, mostly Chinese and Vietnamese, make up the rest.

There is a sizeable Indian community, which rarely crosses the path of the law enforcement authorities. The Tamil Sangham in Berlin is several years old, claimed a housewife whose contact number the bureau gave. Her husband,

# Selling a different green card

By K. V. Krishnaswamy

**BERLIN:** Fear makes the wolf bigger than he is. This German proverb kept coming back to mind as I sought out initial political reaction to the German Government's green card scheme, a bold new initiative to attract information technology professionals from abroad.

The scheme naturally provoked a mixed reaction in a nation that continues to grapple with xenophobia after having had to import manpower for reconstruction following the devastation of World War II. "Kinder, statt Inder" — children, not Indians — was the immediate response at home, from an Opposition Christian Democrat politician. This as well as the slogan "more training for Germans, not more immigrants" reflected ignorance of the basic fact which prompted the Schroeder Government to launch the initiative: that Germany has fallen behind other developed countries in the area of communications and information technology.

The scheme meant acknowledging the uncom-

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fortable reality of a German dependence on immigrant labour, though of a qualitatively different nature, and the Government has had to tread carefully, as admitted by the Social Democrat member of Parliament and party spokesman on the foreigners' issue, Mr. Sebastian Edathy. The energetic, young MP, whose father hails from Kottayam in Kerala and who visited the State last year and looks forward to coming to India again early next year, was confident that his Government would overcome the initial resistance. He was hopeful that the scheme would prove attractive.

The initial hostility has apparently died down, though at the political level, the battle is yet to be won. The Government, for its part, has been pushing the scheme vigorously. The primary objective is to attract IT specialists to fill a large skilled manpower gap. As per the original programme, up to 10,000 work permits are being issued to



Mr. Sebastian Edathy, Social Democrat member of the Bundestag.

foreign information and communications technology specialists, and there is provision for doubling this number to 20,000 on review and re-assessment. The permit holders can bring their families in and work for a maximum of five years when the permit will expire and they will be obliged to return home. Again, spouses, regardless of their qualification, will remain housewives for two years when they can seek a work permit of their own and take up a job.

The Government, obviously not wanting to fuel an anti-immigrant hysteria, explicitly declared that its own scheme billed as the "emergency programme of the Federal Government and the information and communications industry" was not to be mistaken for the American green card which entitles the holder to U.S. citizenship.

The German version had limited scope, intended to serve a limited national purpose. Germany will not encourage the specialists to become entrepreneurs or live on in Germany.

The Government has made clear that the scheme will be restricted to the IT sector and not be extended to other sectors of the economy.

The procedure for grant of the work permit as listed out in official documents makes interesting reading. The Arbeitsamt or employment office which scrutinises the applications for work permit checks whether the job position sought "cannot be filled by a German or European Union specialist", whether the applicant's qualifications are adequate and whether the German employer will provide the same salary and working conditions as for qualified German specialists.

It must be too early to assess the response to the initiative, announced in January, launched in April and effective from August. That the jobs market in these specialist fields is expanding fast was evident from statistical details provided by a Government-sponsored consultancy agency in Dresden, the second major city after Leipzig in the province of Saxony.

Housing one of the top technical universities in the country, Dresden in the former communist eastern half still finds the need for foreign specialists since there is a steady outflow of graduates passing out of its engineering and technical institutions to the prosperous northern and western regions of the country. Surprisingly, of the foreign professionals working in the industrial belt around Dresden, more than half were Indians, according to the agency, though all were not necessarily in the IT sector since the region has had long standing contacts with India from the days of the German Democratic Republic.

Indian students I spoke to in Heidelberg University, one of Europe's oldest, complained about the five-year limit in the green card scheme and said this ceiling could prove a dampener and less attractive to Indian specialists who might prefer the U.S and Britain and even Australia and New Zealand. Language was another possible inhibiting factor. With perhaps some tax incentives, they acknowledged that the high standard of living in Germany could outweigh the other factors. (Concluded)

THE HINDU

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# Achtung Germany

THE latest media headlines are any indication, Germany is in a quandary, if not a crisis. This week, the Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder, during his tour of what used to be East Germany stressed that violence and racism would harm the economy; the Foreign Minister, Mr. Joschka Fischer, warned that racism in Germany would persist and described it and the emergence of neo-nazism as a "twilight zone" between democracy and dictatorship.

A former U.S. diplomat stationed in Berlin predicts that without immigrants Germany may "shrink", as increasingly there will be more pensioners and dependent children than wage-earning and tax-paying workers. According to current estimates, by 2040 the German population may decline to 74 million from the current 82 million if the low birth rate persists and people live longer. Hence, it is argued, Germany needs over two lakh young immigrants a year merely to sustain its present population. This is politically unacceptable and psychologically damaging for the average German, who is essentially a parochial creature.

The cynical way of looking for a silver lining would be to argue that similar trends persist in other European Union countries, with a varying degree of emphasis on racism and xenophobia.

Last week, Mr. Schroeder issued his

strongest warning yet about the impact of an increase in violence by rightwing extremists on the nation's economic prospects, as public prosecutors called for maximum sentences for the three 'skin-heads', two aged 16 and one 24, accused of beating a black African labourer to death. Speaking in an East German town, where economic problems are particularly acute, Mr. Schroeder warned: "Anyone as dependent on exports as Germany cannot afford for others to write or report badly about them." The Chancellor reiterated his perception that it was essential for the German people to demonstrate that racism and xenophobia were not typical of their society.

"That is not Germany. Germany's image is of decent, hard-working people. That is the image we want to spread abroad." Mr. Schroeder then unveiled the Government's new proposals to contain the challenges posed by rightwing extremists. These include banning of neo-nazi demonstrations which send electronic images of a fascist and racist Germany around the world.

Mr. Fischer is pessimistic about the eradication of rightwing extremism in the former communist-ruled and economically backward eastern region. He predicts that it will take a "generation and a half" for East Germans to match Western democratic and economic standards. According to Mr.

**The upsurge of neo-nazism has left Germany's leaders worried about the country's image and the impact on its economy. BATUK GATHANI reports.**

Fischer, anti-immigration violence is not confined to the eastern parts. He repeated a liberal German perception that the post-War decades saw "no development of civil society" in East Germany. This has left the region more vulnerable to neo-nazism.

Mr. Fischer is a prominent member of the Green Party and was an anti-American protester in the 1970s, who has gradually converted to Atlantic values based on the core ethics of multi-party democracy, rule of law and the principles of free market economy.

The average German is embarrassed by the upsurge of racist violence. The country has got used to the presence of neo-nazi extremists who are yet to find a seat in Parliament. Germany is edging towards a more liberal immigration policy and is in the process of easing rules of granting citizenship to foreigners born in the country.

There are over two million Turks in Germany whose hard work has con-

tributed to the building of the post-War economic miracle. The Schroeder Administration is also trying to make Germany a more attractive venue for foreign investment by lowering notoriously high taxes and easing tough labour market regulations. The neo-nazi fascist demonstrations are often met with much larger and vocal liberal demonstrations which instantly smother the whiff of xenophobia.

But the spectre of rising unemployment and lacklustre economic growth has certainly brought neo-nazi politics in vogue among young Germans born in the 1970s and Eighties. Many are rated as "rightwing revisionist intellectuals" who seek to define nazi identity for their reunited Germany. It is also a form of defiance of the established German order.

Some are impressed by rightwing writers and film-makers and carry the look of young innocents. Smartly-dressed, they are often seen in fashionable bars of Berlin and other major cities talking about history and the current state of the nation. This is the upper crust of the neo-nazi cult; at the bottom are uneducated and scruffy "skin-heads" who loaf on the streets like their other European counterparts, ostensibly to "bash up" foreigners — mainly blacks and 'pakis' (Pakistanis), a term used to describe most Asians.

With monotonous regularity, the media reports "ugly racial incidents" against ethnic minorities in major European cities. However, the issue of foreigners has dominated the public debate in Germany where "heavy" immigration has taken place since the collapse of the communist-ruled East European countries. Today, there are over seven million foreigners living in Germany. Official figures reveal that in 1990 and 1991, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Berlin Wall, 58 per cent of the people seeking political asylum in E.U. countries came to Germany. The costs of accommodating asylum-seekers are high. The crisis is compounded by the sudden rise of "economic migrants" from Asia and Africa. Since the troubled economic climate in mid-1992, more acts of violence have been committed against foreigners in Germany — 750 were reported last year.

In the post-War years, Germany had emerged as the "locomotive" economic power of the E.U. Immigrant workers were then seen as a part of the great German economic miracle and often hailed as "welcome guest workers". A that is now history. Recent opinion polls reveal that "job insecurity" is the biggest worry of the average German. The neo-nazis have argued in simplistic terms that Germany's unemployment crisis could be immediately resolved if seven million foreigners were kicked out overnight — Idi Amin style. The sad reality is that such clichéd concepts have an instant popular appeal.

# Schroeder missile mair's Clinton prize-day

FROM DEBORAH CHARLES

Aachen (Germany), June 2 (Reuters): US President Bill Clinton was honoured today for his contribution to unity in Europe but German Chancellor Gerhart Schroeder warned him not to destroy that cohesion as he decides whether to deploy an anti-missile defence system.

Clinton, who has already been told by Schroeder that a national missile defence (NMD) could upset the global arms balance, was cautioned by him again after receiving the prestigious Charlemagne Prize in the German border city of Aachen.

Schroeder told Clinton — the first US President to receive the award — that although it was the Americans' right to take decisions they need to ensure their security, NMD should be debated with its European partners.

"As this issue could have effects well beyond the USA, it is in the sense of the alliance that it be treated in a spirit of partnership," Schroeder said of NMD which Washington says would shoot down rockets fired by rogue nu-

clear states.

Russia has warned that the proposed missile defence system could wreck existing arms control pacts.

Clinton, who heads to Russia tomorrow and will address the issue in a summit with President Vladimir Putin, did not speak of NMD. Instead, he focused his comments on the challenges facing Europe — in particular the integration of Russia and the need for an end to conflicts in the Balkans

and said the US would continue to support Europe.

"I believe Europe should want to strengthen our alliance even as you grow stronger," he said. "The alliance has been the bedrock of our security for half a century. It can be the foundation on which our common future is built."

"It's easy to point to our differences. Many do. We've always had our differences and being human and imperfect, we always will," he said. "America must remain Eu-

rope's good partner and good ally. America has a permanent interest in a permanent alliance with Europe."

Standing in a courtyard on the side of Aachen's 1,000-year old cathedral that houses a shrine to Charlemagne, Clinton said he had done what he could to assist in that effort, but noted there was more to be done.

"Let us keep building this cathedral, the cathedral of European unity, on the foundation of

our alliance for freedom," he said to applause from several thousand townspeople who virtually shut down their city for the ceremony.

Apart from his warning on the missile shield, Schroeder heaped praise on Clinton in a long speech detailing the US President's efforts to bring about peace and unity in Europe — from Cyprus to Northern Ireland to the Balkans.

"Bill Clinton can look back on his two terms in office with pride," Schroeder said in his speech which, like the one by Aachen's Lord Mayor Jurgen Linden, appeared to be a farewell tribute to Clinton who leaves office in January.

"One of his great predecessors, President (John) Kennedy, once won the hearts of all Germans with an unforgettable phrase, when he proclaimed himself to be 'ein Berliner.'" Schroeder said. "Bill, with your commitment, you have become a European."

In a citation from the city, Aachen honoured Clinton for his action in preserving ethical norms and the rule of law, including the use of military force.

## Cigar gift fires Monica memories

Berlin, June 2 (Reuters): US President Bill Clinton was apparently not amused when German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder offered him a box of Cuban cigars during an otherwise jovial dinner late last night.

Witnesses in a restaurant in east Berlin said the US President stopped laughing when Schroeder offered him cigars that development minister Heidemarie Wiczorek-Zeul had brought back from a trip to Cuba last week.

"The cigars that I am holding in my hand come from Wiczorek-Zeul and from Cuba," Schroeder said, according to eavesdropping diners in the restaurant.

"And thus I am holding one of Fidel Castro's cigars in my hand that I would like to give to you," he said.

Washington, unlike Germany, still maintains an embargo on trade — including cigars — with Communist Cuba.

The witnesses said President Clinton, perhaps remembering both protocol and the reports of cigars put to curious uses in the Monica Lewinsky affair, "looked irritated" and then "smiled politely."

A German official confirmed Schroeder had offered the gift but did not say whether Clinton had accepted it.

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# Schroeder urges Clinton not to offend Russia

Vijay Dutt  
London, June 2

GERMAN CHANCELLOR Gerhard Schroeder warned President Bill Clinton that the US proposed new National Defence Missile System could trigger an arms race. He said that the Russians should not be offended.

"It is in the interest of all of us to ensure political and economic stability in Russia," he told the President.

The two leaders had a long meeting, much beyond the scheduled time, soon after Mr Clinton arrived in the German capital, Berlin, on Thursday afternoon.

The President is on a week-long European tour, which is seen as a sort of a farewell visit by him. Mr Clinton showed no reaction when Mr Schroeder told the Press about his warning about the arms race.

Mr Clinton, however, stressed that the US has had with Germany a "profoundly important relationship" in the last 50 years. He was here in Berlin, the President said, to ensure that the understanding and relationship between the two countries improved even more in the next 50 years.

There was no mention of the sudden and last minute withdrawal by the US from participation in the EXPO 2000 at Hanover. It has

vexed the people and media in the country and a debate has been going on as to why the Americans decided to keep off. A big site at the fair had been earmarked for their pavillion and following their refusal to come, it had to be filled up rather quickly with other stalls.

Schroeder had earlier in the morning said at the Press conference in the fair's convention hall, that the decision by the Americans not to participate was their internal matter and that it has had no impact on the US-German relations, which was close and cordial.

Mr Clinton has, indeed, been given the highest German honour, the Karlspreis, at a special ceremony in Aachen, on the border German-France border, in recognition of his efforts to promote peace in Europe.

The US has apparently adjusted to the evolution of an integrated Europe, with Germany being its backbone, and has accepted that it can no longer lead policies in Europe, said Garry Smith of the American Academy.

Surprisingly, the two-day visit of Mr Clinton was a rather low-key affair. There were no crowds lining up the streets on his route from the Berlin airport nor did the media give him precedence over reports about EXPO 2000.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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## Germany to phase out nuclear power

**BERLIN, JUNE 15.** Germany will phase out nuclear power under an agreement that the Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder, reached with the bosses of the four major power companies today.

In a compromise that came after more than four hours of talks in Berlin, the two sides agreed that all plants would close after 32 years of operation, Mr. Schroeder said. The Government had pushed for 30-year lifespans, while the industry had demanded 35-year periods. This means the last of the country's 19 nuclear power plants will close in about 20 years, making Germany the first major industrial power to commit to an exit from nuclear energy.

The first plants should go offline within two or three years, but Mr. Schroeder refused to name a date for the last plant to shut down. Rather than being handed closure dates, the power companies would be allowed finite amounts of electricity they can produce in nuclear plants, measured in billions of kilowatt hours. According to figures discussed earlier, the last German nuclear power plant can be expected to close around 2021.

Mr. Schroeder's centre-left Government, with the Greens Party as the junior partner, was elected in 1998 with a pledge to end the unpopular use of nuclear power, which now supplies about a third of the country's electricity.

Concerns about the safety of nuclear waste transports and about where to store the radioactive materials sparked a series of mass protests centred around the state of Lower Saxony in the late 1990's. The Greens, whose anti-nuclear stance helped the 'Red-Green' coalition defeat the Christian

Democrats, had demanded a speedy shut-down, but Mr. Schroeder insisted on reaching a consensus with plant owners to avoid future lawsuits from the companies.

The Green Environment Minister, Mr. Juergen Trittin, whose party came under increasing pressure as the negotiations, dragged on for one and a half years, and the Economics Minister, Mr. Werner Mueller, who has no party affiliation, joined Mr. Schroeder in the talks. The Government had threatened earlier that if talks broke down, it would pass a law shutting down all plants after 30 years' operation.

The deal by the Government and the power industry has drawn sharp criticism from the country's Opposition and environmental movement. While leading members of the Opposition attacked the agreement and threatened to overturn it, environmentalists saw the deal as undercutting nuclear safety standards and being too favourable to the power companies.

The Premier of the key state of Hesse, Mr. Roland Koch, a member of the Christian Democrats, said: "We will use every legal means to torpedo this compromise."

Two of the nation's influential environmental movements, Greenpeace and the Association for the Environment and Protection of Nature have criticised the deal, describing it as "a present to industry." Apart from being a guarantee for the industry's continued existence, a spokeswoman for Greenpeace saw the Government's influence in ensuring security in nuclear plans as drastically reduced. — DPA

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16 JUN 2000

# Francis-German summit focus on ties

By Batuk Gathani

**BRUSSELS, JUNE 26.** The two-day summit meeting between the German Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder, and the French President, Mr. Jacques Chirac, in Berlin from Monday is ostensibly aimed at patrolling the economic and political ties between the two countries.

Analysts point out that the German and French leaders are concerned about the recent deterioration in bilateral relations. The two countries are key members of the European Union, representing 140 million of the 370 million citizens of the E.U.

France takes over the six-monthly rotating presidency of the E.U. on July 1. In recent weeks, French and German leaders have intensified their contacts through frequent meetings. The E.U. is entering a key phase of the political and economic development with the proposed expansion into eastern and central Europe where some 10 former communist ruled countries are in a queue waiting for full membership of the E.U., as they restructure and reform their political, economic and financial institutions to meet the basic criteria of E.U. membership.

Hence, it is also a foregone conclusion that a German-Franco agreement on major issues is a precondition for further reforms and debate in European institutions and bureaucracy.

Mr. Chirac will address the German Parliament in the newly constructed "Reichstag" in Berlin and will be the first foreign leader to speak in the building. He will also meet German students and leaders of German com-

mercial and industry, to get the true feel of German thinking on various pan-European matters.

This is not just a major public relations cosmic exercise for good photo opportunities, but both sides are keen to recreate an era of more intimate relationship which existed between their immediate predecessors — Mr. Helmut Kohl and Francois Mitterrand.

The French also feel strongly that the European Commission interferes too much in the national affairs of E.U. member states. Hence, France wants planned reforms to be both pragmatic and radical without interfering with the national sovereignty of member states. The French are also not happy about the recent remarks by the German Foreign Minister about creating a federal state of Europe. On the eve of his Berlin visit, as Mr. Chirac put it, "We are not founding a United States of Europe but we are building a united Europe of states." Next week, the British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, will call on Mr. Schroeder in Berlin.

A single thread which has run through half a century of post-War European politics is a zig-zagging theme of German-Franco solidarity, which has inevitably waxed and waned, but its contour and parameters have set the pace and mood of pan-European politics. For example, a great deal about creating a common European market and its evolution into E.U., the emergence of European monetary union, followed by the launch of a single European currency, the euro, on January 1, 1999, depended on what happened between Germany and France.

The current German-Franco meeting will identify common aspirations about the proposed expansion of the E.U. and future of the euro. The European analysts feel fresh air gushing through the corridors of pan-European politics, as German and French leaders endeavour to narrow ideological and political perceptions, over major pan-European issues.



The German Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder (right), and the French President, Mr. Jacques Chirac, in Hanover on Sunday. — AP

27 JUN 2000

27 JUN 2000

# Kohl party leader wins key support

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Berlin, April 11 (AP): The leader of Germany's hardline conservatives pledged support today for the newly elected head of the scandal-plagued Christian Democrats, bolstering Angela Merkel's drive to rebuild a strong opposition to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.

Bavarian governor Edmund Stoiber, and leader of the CDU-aligned Christian Social Union, assured a convention of Christian Democrats that his regional party would be "a stable and reliable partner." Stoiber's backing of Merkel sends a crucial signal.

Though Merkel was confirmed by an overwhelming 96 per cent of convention delegates yesterday, there remain concerns that her positions on issues such as immigration and abortion are too liberal — especially for Bavaria's ultra-conservatives, who cooperate in Parliament with the Christian Democrats.

"We will let no one divide us," Stoiber told the Christian Democratic delegates. But he also point-

ed up clear guideposts, reminding delegates that his party opposes letting Germany evolve into a "multicultural society" and stands for a strengthening of "marriage and the family."

The Christian Democrats are using the convention to raise the party's profile as an opposition force, and put behind it as much as possible images of the campaign financing scandal centred on former Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

The new Christian Democratic leader in Parliament told delegates today that the opposition intends to challenge Schroeder once Kagain on a broad front, including key themes such as tax reform and foreign policy.

Friedrich Merz, who like Merkel has been untainted by the scandal, charged Schroeder's government "has given either fundamentally wrong answers or none at all" on major political challenges. He cited unemployment hovering around 10 per cent and strategy for enlarging the Euro-

pean Union.

To end a two-day convention designed to rally the party after months of scandal, delegates were due to approve an "Essen Declaration" outlining centre-right creeds such as private enterprise, less government and stronger efforts to bring Germany up to speed in the information revolution. But the manifesto provided only a vague sense of direction, reflecting the party's struggle to find a coherent Opposition strategy after 16 years in power under Kohl.

Disgraced by the scandal, Kohl did not attend the convention. He set off the party's crisis last December with his admission that he accepted some \$1 million in secret — thus illegal — donations while chancellor in the 1990s.

Kohl, however, sent a telegram congratulating Merkel and offering his support. "Your excellent election results are a huge encouragement for the future. I wish you good luck and God bless."



THE splendid isolation of Helmut Kohl is coming to an end. On key questions who paid him £650,000 in cash and where did the money go, he remains stubbornly silent, like a prisoner of war trained only to give name, rank and number. But the former Chancellor's heavy armour is being pierced. Above all, allegations that the Elf refinery deal was Franco-German back-scratching, symptom of a rotten relationship between the Chancellor and Francois Mitterrand, have pushed him into the media's embrace. Naturally, he denies all and sees conspiracy everywhere.

There is no reasonable political explanation for Mr Kohl's stonewalling and his apparent willingness to let the Christian Democratic Union, which he describes as his family, tear itself apart.

The reason seems rather to lie in the realms of clinical psychology. In *Stern*, a weekly illustrated magazine, the fashionable psychiatrist, Dr Hans-Joachim Maatz, compares Mr Kohl with the former Communist leaders of East Germany and Eastern Europe who could not accept that the world around them had changed. Instead they sealed them-

# Inside Germany

**What Helmut Kohl says still makes some kind of sense, but for the most part he is speaking in a vacuum, says ROGER BOYES**



This amounts to no more than a one-man election campaign against his own party and deepens his solitude rather than offering salvation.

In this sense, Dr Maatz is certainly right. Mr Kohl has never been closer, in his vocabulary and his sentiment, to

Erich Honecker, the East German chief who would raise his fist in Communist salute long after Communism had collapsed, or the former Stasi boss, Erich Mielke, who said: "I love you all." In democratic states, the shock of losing power after a long period in office can be even more devastating than for a fallen dictator.

What Mr Kohl says still makes some kind of sense, but for the most part he is speaking in a vacuum. Little wonder that he has stopped attending parliamentary debates. The weaknesses that seemed charming when he was in power guzzling bagfuls of sweets while listening to rivals delivering their speeches now seem to be the sad mannerisms of a lonely and slightly disturbed old man.

Other psychiatrists have been reaching back to Mr Kohl's early childhood. His elder brother, Walter, died in the war and his father, bereft, virtually ignored Helmut. As a result, he has an almost bottomless need for open displays of affection. Denied this, he is lost, a man without a compass.

- *The Times, London.*

# Kohl's reputation at stake as probe begins

By Batuk Gathani

BRUSSELS, JAN. 5. The fate and reputation of the former German Chancellor, Mr. Helmut Kohl, who ruled for 16 years and rated as the architect of the German unification and elder statesman of the European Union, now hangs in delicate balance as the prosecutor's office opened an investigation into the party fund scandal, on Monday. This can lead to anything and the worst consequence could be embezzlement charges, if he is found guilty.

The popular media attention on Mr. Kohl's so-called 'career crises' is embarrassing for his admirers, as the criminal investigation into the system of German secret bank accounts used by Mr. Kohl to channel the so-called 'undisclosed donations' by companies and individuals has begun.

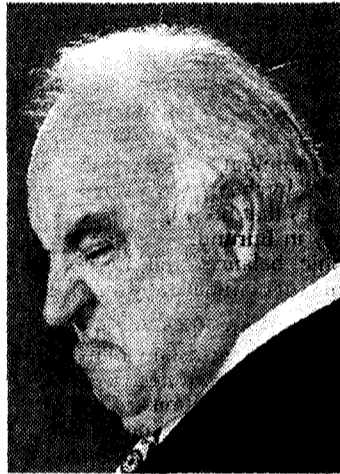
This amounts to an equivalent of some Rs. 4 crores plus and though the amount may not be huge and almost modest by what political parties here spend on electioneering, Mr. Kohl could face either a stiff fine or a five-year jail sentence if convicted.

Under the electoral system, parties receive substantial funding from the Berlin Government and to eliminate the ruffraff a party has to receive over five per cent of the popular vote. The parties then receive one d.mark for every vote cast and half a d.mark for every d.mark that goes to the party's public fund. All this is rated as a legally registered contribution by the Government to political par-

ties. Mr. Kohl's adversaries in the Christian Democratic Party now claim that he had 'cheated' the party out of government subsidiary by not declaring the private donations which he personally collected from individuals and companies. Mr. Kohl has argued that he will not give out the names because 'he has made a 'moral commitment' to such donors that he will not disclose such contributors names. This is the heart of the matter as the Christian Democrats now realise that the party may have to pay a penalty of double the illicit sum he collected.

On the face of it, the Christian Democrats can survive such a financial shock if the prosecutors do not insist on paying accrued interest and payment of accumulated fines and return of subsidies, since the secret bank accounts were set up before 1993 or over seven years ago. Under such circumstances, the party may have no option but to declare financial bankruptcy which can substantially damage its political credibility. The revelations have certainly weakened the German Opposition.

The ruling coalition of Social Democrats and the Greens or environmentalists now functioning as 'Red-Green alliance' find that their political fortunes have suddenly revived with the Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder, last month initiating major tax reforms and other 'business friendly' measures, to attract investments and create jobs. The trial and tribulations of Mr. Kohl



serve to beef up their advantage.

The Opposition leaders are hence in a quandary. Though the immediate temptation is to blame it all on Mr. Kohl, it is also argued that the party leaders could have prevented the catastrophe by challenging him in the 1990s. But they say that Mr. Kohl — in early nineties — was at the height of his prestige and power in the background of the unification.

But the reality is that the German political icon is today seen losing his lustre.

The popular media is busy writing stories about strange goings on in the ruling party's headquarters during Mr. Kohl's era. The stories are spiced with tales of money stuffed in suitcases, alleged links to international arms dealers and all this laced with secret bank accounts and missing

files and documents, happening in the grey world of German politics.

Traditionally because of high German personal, corporate, social security and inheritance taxes, most wealthy Germans have preferred to hide their wealth in neighbouring Luxembourg and Switzerland. Only if the foreign governments could prove their clients links with drug smuggling or other criminal activities, then the banks and tax havens may cooperate with authorities concerned. In reality this rarely happens, though there are cases in which banks have cooperated. It is an open secret that substantial German wealth is stashed away in secret bank accounts across the border.

The Christian Democrats are currently led by Mr. Wolfgang Schauble, an old friend of Mr. Kohl and a respectable old school German politician, who is now obliged to provide convincing explanations for the so-called secret and mystery funds and contributions. How much will the party leaders disclose remains to be seen as there is some mystery where the current trail may end.

It is also not certain how Parliament responds to the crises, when there are crucial State elections due in two key German States. So far Mr. Schroeder's Social Democrats have performed miserably in all the recent State elections since he came to power in September, 1998.

HPD-16  
20/1

# Kohl refuses to reveal names, quits party post

By Batuk Gathani

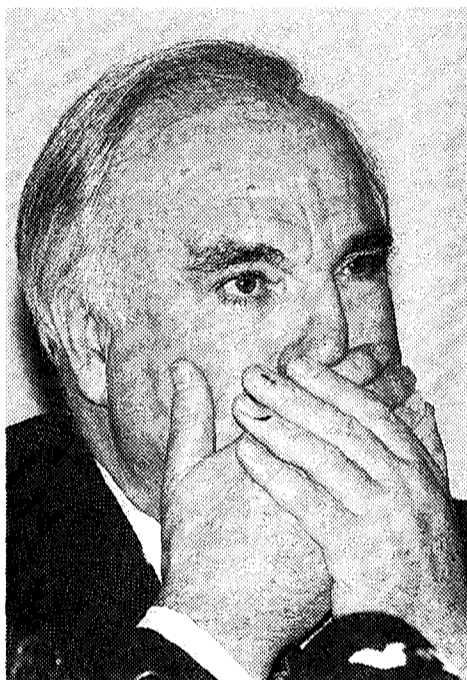
**BRUSSELS, JAN. 19.** The former German Chancellor, Mr. Helmut Kohl was forced last night to resign as honorary chairman of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU), following his refusal to reveal the names of fund contributors to the party. It was an ignominious exit for a man who was Chancellor for 16 years and the architect of the German re-unification.

*(German)*  
The cash donations scandal, which sparked a furore in the country, is now under police investigation. The former Interior Minister, Mr. Manfred Kanther, resigned his seat in parliament two days ago, becoming the first victim of the scandal. Mr. Kohl's resignation came shortly after the executive committee of the party instructed him to reveal the names of the secret donors who paid the mark equivalent of nearly Rs. 4

crores when he was Chancellor and party leader.

In a statement, Mr. Kohl said: "The decision to resign is not an easy one. I have been a member of the Christian Democratic Party for 50 years. The party is and will remain my political home. But I am in no position to meet the party's demand that I break the promise I made to those who financially supported my work in the party." He added: "I have served in important offices for four decades. In so doing, I have also made mistakes which I have publicly acknowledged. I have always tried to do my duty."

The former Chancellor's admirers feel that Mr. Kohl has done the honourable thing by resigning. They feel his personal reputation is intact with his refusal to reveal the



**MUM'S THE WORD: Mr. Helmut Kohl who was forced to quit his party post on Tuesday. — AP**

names of the anonymous donors. It remains to be seen if other party leaders will follow suit. They have, so far resisted calls for resignation, choosing instead to fix the blame on their former leader. Their strategy smacks of opportunism and self-survival. It is no secret that senior CDU leaders in the Kohl era knew about the donations. In fact, these leaders even persuaded Mr. Wolfgang Schaeuble — Mr. Kohl's Number Two and obvious successor — not to quit.

The illegal contributions go beyond the funds controlled personally by Mr. Kohl, who has consistently maintained that he was not a beneficiary of the funds. The investigative authorities have, so far, not come up with any tangible evidence to contradict him. Mr. Kohl was wrong in not having declared the secret contributions to the authorities. It is

ironical that his former proteges, who are equally involved in the campaign for party funds, have turned their former boss into a victim. Mr. Schaeuble has also admitted to taking a cash contribution from the same arms dealer, who allegedly gave donations to Mr. Kohl, but he has been persuaded not to resign.

The ruling Social Democrats led by the Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder, are keenly watching the unfolding crisis within the CDU. Many disillusioned CDU supporters could switch allegiance to the Social Democrats who are seen to be following business-friendly centrist policies. If the Social Democrats and the Greens party launch a bold reformist agenda, it will improve their chances of a second term in office.

**THE HINDU**

**20 JAN 2000**

# Party may sue Kohl over fund scam

REUTERS

52 11 211  
BERLIN, Jan. 21. — Germany's Christian Democrat Opposition might sue its leader Mr Helmut Kohl to make him reveal the source of secret slush funds that have dragged the party into its worst scandal.

The woes of a party already tearing itself apart deepened yesterday when a senior party aide hanged himself and police said his suicide note had led them to open a fraud investigation.

At the heart of the scandal is Mr Kohl's forced admission that he received \$ 1 million in undeclared gifts for the party during his 16 years as chancellor, in contravention of electoral law.

Party leaders, many of them his proteges, des-

perately want <sup>Germany</sup> him to name the donors to shake off the scandal. Late yesterday former party general secretary Mr Heiner Geissler said on national ZDF TV that the CDU was considering launching a civil suit because the crisis could not be overcome until Mr Kohl named names.

Mr Kohl has denied ever selling favours but says he promised his secret donors never to reveal their identity. He has blasted pressure exerted by CDU colleagues and the German media as "a witch-hunt". This morning, he brushed off journalists as he left his home. "You're here every morning looking for sensation. One would hope a minimum standard of journalism is possible. But I don't see it here," Mr Kohl said.

THE STATESMAN  
22 JAN 2000

# The Kohl crisis deepens

ROGER BOYES on  
the scandal-hit  
ex-Chancellor's  
fight to clear his  
name after the  
death of a party  
aide

**T**HE sudden, solitary death of Wolfgang Huellen — he was found hanging in his bathroom on Thursday — has sent German politicians into a frenzy, deeply uncertain as to how the corruption scandal, known as Kohlgate, will end. While the Berlin murder squad on Friday searched the apartment and offices of the Christian Democratic Union's financial specialist looking for documents on illegal cash transfers that could help to explain his suicide, the German flag was draped at half mast over the Reichstag. In the parliament building grim-faced deputies who had been snapping at one another for a fortnight shook hands and exchanged tense greetings: the political class regards Kohlgate as a crisis of the state rather than merely a body blow to the CDU.

Despite the involvement of the murder squad, investigators seem to have little doubt that the 49-year-old Huellen, father of two sons, took his own life. He left two letters, one to the CDU and one to his wife. On the basis of his letter to the CDU, the state prosecutor has started a fraud investigation. Plainly, Huellen was not a happy man.

Friends say the accountant had a highly developed sense of duty and, as budget director of the Christian Democratic parliamentary group since 1984, he was weighed down by recent events.

The scramble to find missing cash and quick answers to explosive questions has put Christian Democratic officials under immense pressure; politicians are looking for scapegoats in the administration. Huellen certainly knew of a #310,000 illegal transfer of cash in 1997 from the CDU parliamentary group budget to the party's central war chest. "Huellen knew all money movements in the party budget, that was his job," said a former colleague.

That opens up three possibilities. Huellen may have been asked to conceal a cash movement and subsequently

found the moral conflict unbearable. A second theory: he was coming under fire from politicians because the financial accounts told a different story from the version being peddled in public. The third explanation is that he

personally profited from the cash swimming around the political fish tank. No one on Friday could believe in the personal enrichment theory.

Huellen was a man who lived for his work, so much so that he was willing to live apart from his family (who stayed in Bonn), away from his comfortable suburban villa in a soulless one-room Berlin apartment, away from his tennis club and friends.

The police protocol of his last hours paints a banal picture of a despairing man rather than of any extravagant plot against his life.

At 7 am he rang his wife in Bonn and promised to ring back within the hour. By 8 am his wife was receiving no answer from the Berlin phone number. At 9 am, she checked whether he had called in sick at the office. Two hours later the police

were alerted and at 11.40 am they found the body and the suicide letters.

His immediate boss, Joachim Horster, announced that Huellen had committed suicide, probably for personal reasons. By nightfall no-one believed that version; the personal had become public and Kohlgate had claimed its first fatality.

Helmut Kohl drew his own conclusions from the death. It was time, he decided, to launch a barn-storming campaign to persuade Germans that he was not the corrupt Godfather of Berlin politics. "A 24-hour witchhunt is underway against me," Kohl told thousands of Christian Democratic supporters in Bremen.

The former German leader is locked in an internal power struggle with senior echelons of the party which

he led for 25 years. On Friday, one of his Christian Democratic critics, Heiner Geissler, suggested that the party could initiate a private prosecution against Kohl.

The former Chancellor has publicly admitted taking \$650,000 in undeclared cash donations between 1993 and 1998. He refuses to name the donors and thus had broken the law. He claims he cannot break a vow of secrecy to his financial backers. "As I understand honour, it means keeping your word," he said to ripples of applause. "In all these years in power I could never be bribed."

This reduces the spreading corruption scandal to a simple formula. Nobody is actually claiming that Kohl personally pocketed cash, but simplification was always one of his techniques on the election stump and in both Bremen and Hamburg, Kohl's first pit stops since being stripped of the title of "honorary chairman", the crowd seemed to approve.

His calculation is that ordinary Germans are in sympathy with him and that once the party leadership realises this it will have to strike a deal to bring him out of quarantine. The opinion polls show that the Christian Democrats have lost 11 per cent support over the past fortnight but the drop in Kohl's popularity is less clear. The readers of the mass circulation *Bild* put him second on the list of politicians who could conceivably pull the Christian Democrats out of their crisis.

Kohl now avoids parliament. His was the only empty seat on Thursday in the emergency debate on the party corruption scandal. His strategy is to create a Kohl faction within the leadership. As soon as the Christian Democrats lose an election — there is a regional election coming up next month — his supporters will press for the resignation of Wolfgang Schauble, the party chairman. And that, in the imagination of the Kohl loyalists, will be the first step towards the rehabilitation of their lost hero. — *The Times*, London

HPD-16  
2387

# Feet of clay? ✓



The former German Chancellor, Mr. Helmut Kohl ... a blow to his reputation.

**Mr. Helmut Kohl, who till recently strode the European stage, is caught in a scandal over party funds which has shaken up German politics.**  
BATUK GATHANI reports.

**M**R. HELMUT Kohl ruled Germany for 16 years and led the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) for 25. He was the longest-serving Chancellor in the 20th Century and rated the architect of German unification. Mr. Kohl also dominated European politics like a titan. He and the late French President, Francois Mitterrand, are widely regarded as the main creators of the European Union, as both ruthlessly persevered to consolidate economic and political unification of the Continent, personified by the launch of the Euro on January 1, 1999.

But this past week saw his otherwise brilliant career and impeccable reputation overshadowed by the scandal over

funding for his party. The CDU, main German opposition party, is politically and psychologically seriously damaged. And, as a result, the Social Democrats headed by the present Chancellor, Mr. Gerhard Schroeder, who only two months ago was widely dismissed as a permanent loser, could slip into a second term of office after the parliamentary elections due in late 2002.

Mr. Kohl is accused of accepting secret contributions to party funds and, more than that, concealing them in undeclared secret bank accounts. The sums involved — so far just over Rs. 4 crores — are small by any criterion and as a cynical Indian observer put it, "peanuts" by standards of Indian cor-

ruption. But, the Germans are overwhelmed — the conviction so far was that their democracy was healthy and honest, despite reservations in many quarters about the increasingly warm relations between politicians and the business sector. Even the Social Democrats and the Greens, who are increasingly trying to pursue a "business-friendly" political strategy, have their friends and favourites in the German commercial and banking establishments.

The current scandal may take months to resolve and the general perception is that at the end of the day, the CDU may face the prospect of paying heavy fines for breaking party financing laws. The former Chancellor is still a popular and widely-admired figure as few Germans seriously believe that Mr. Kohl was a direct beneficiary of such illegal private contributions.

The popular German media has had a field day, portraying a sleazy scenario of spy and mafia movies with rituals of currency notes stuffed in suitcases being handed over to politicians by arms dealers for favours rendered. On Thursday, the person who managed finances for the CDU, Mr. Wolfgang Huellen, a 49-year-old father of two sons, hanged himself. The German police are investigating if it was indeed a suicide.

The man in the news is Mr. Schreiber, a wily but friendly arms dealer, described as a "friendly cash dispenser". According to media reports, Mr. Schreiber worked as a German political lobbyist in the Kohl era and was arrested in Canada five months ago for tax evasion and bribery. So far, the German authorities' efforts to extradite him have not been successful, since his Canadian lawyers claim their client is a victim of unsubstantiated allegations by the German Government. It is an open secret that prominent CDU politicians have had good contacts with Mr. Schreiber.

Mr. Kohl became a member of the CDU in 1947 and rose gradually. He was often dismissed as little more than a seasoned party politician, who lacked both charisma and panache. But when Mr. Kohl defeated the brilliant and charismatic Mr. Helmut Schmidt to become Chancellor in 1976, the media and political rivals alike conceded that to underestimate both his intellect and instinct was a grave error, as the list of those he had vanquished was long and distinguished. Many are still wondering if it is time to write his political obituary, for the man is both unpredictable and resourceful.

On April 3, Mr. Kohl will turn 70 and the CDU has to decide how to celebrate the birthday of the "once great man". The party is already scouting around to replace the "old generation" leadership which flourished under Mr. Kohl. But some of his admirers still feel that the ex-Chancellor is a valiant and honourable man who brilliantly led the CDU for a quarter of a century.

# Mitterand linked to Kohl scandal: Report

DEUTSCHE PRESSE AGENTEUR  
HAMBURG, JAN 23

THE German funds scandal around ex-Chancellor Helmut Kohl widened at the weekend with new claims that the late French President Francois Mitterrand contributed millions in undeclared funds to help finance Kohl's re-election campaign.

Secret service officials helped make the deal in which some 30 million German Marks (\$ 15.7) flowed into the Christian Democrats' (CDU) war chest as part of a bilateral oil industry deal, according to reports by German and French television stations. The payments were allegedly made in 1992 when France's state-owned oil giant Elf Aquitaine bought the Leuna oil re-

finery in the formerly east German state of Saxony-Anhalt. Germany's public ard station and France Deux television said on Saturday.

The ARD reporting informant ranked Mitterrand as saying: "It was not bribe money. The money was for the election campaign. The payment was in the state's interest - for Europe."

Kohl, who led the party for 25 years, immediately denied the report, which he called a smear campaign. The German report said Elf, under Mitterrand's orders, paid



Helmut Kohl

Leuna deal, and that Kohl had never received money from Paris or acknowledged any such payments.

CDU general secretary Angela Merkel said an audit of party finances by international chartered accountants Ernst Young of that period had produced no clues to

some 85 million Marks, of which 30 million Marks were allegedly a hidden payment to aid Kohl's campaign.

A spokesman for Kohl said claims of financial help from Mitterrand to Kohl were lies, that the two leaders never discussed money in connection to the Elf-

Leuna deal, and that Kohl had never received money from Paris or acknowledged any such payments.

back claims of such payments. She added however, that the new allegations showed the need to completely clear up all questions regarding the conservative party's financial affairs. The CDU leadership was due to debate the as yet unreleased audit report this evening local time. The chairman of a parliamentary committee investigating the scandal, Social Democrat Volker Neumann, spoke of "almost unimaginable events" following the latest reports. A search for missing chancellor's office files on the Leuna case would be stepped up, he told ARD.

The news weekly *Der Spiegel* reported that files on the billion-dollar Leuna deal had also gone missing from Saxony-Anhalt government offices. Staff of the

state's new premier, Social Democrat Reinhard Hoepfner, had found almost no documents about the deal, which was agreed under his CDU predecessor Werner Muench.

Last December it emerged that key Leuna files from the Kohl era had gone missing from the Chancellor's office. Swiss and French investigators have for years searched for some 85 million Marks in bribes that went missing after they were allegedly transferred to Swiss bank accounts as part of the sale, which also included the Minol chain of petrol stations.

Kohl and Mitterrand, elder statesmen of Europe who enjoyed a cordial personal relationship, both supported Elf's interest in the German company.