

# Cutback on West German development

## Money now in short supply in Bonn

The West German research ministry is being forced by economic problems to reassess priorities. Last week, the Bundestag began a discussion of the proposals put forward by the new science minister, Andreas von Bulow, whose plan for 1981 will increase the budget by only 5.2 per cent, now less than the rate of inflation. This new small increase has come as a shock to West German planners who are unused to having their budget cut.

The increase is less than had been forecast in the three-year forward plan published a year ago, which promised an increase of 10 per cent (in money terms) for 1981. The new research budget is not, however, out of line with revisions of other government expenditures, consequences of the worsening economy.

The research ministry, which controls the lion's share of funds for German research, is planning to save money by cancelling some new projects. Mr von Bulow says that he does not want to delay projects already under way. Expensive demonstration projects are likely to suffer most, but the government hopes that some of their cost can be taken over by the utilities (in nuclear power and coal), by industry, the Länder or local government. University research may do better because of the commitment to keeping university researchers in employment. The aim is to keep the proportion of the budget spent on basic research at just over 30 per cent.

Three particular projects are affected. A demonstration track for testing an advanced passenger train and a new tokamak device for fusion experiments at the Institute for Plasma Physics in Garching have already been abandoned. The cancellation of the demonstration track is expected to save DM30–40 million this year and DM 250 million by the end of 1983. The fusion device, known as Zephyr, would have cost an estimated DM500 million to build at 1980 prices. Its cancellation has removed a major project from the work of the plasma physics institute and has led the ministry to ask the institute to become more involved in the Joint European Torus (JET) under construction in Britain.

A decision has yet to be reached on the fate of the third project, a coal liquefaction plant being built in Virginia, United States. Germany and Japan are each expected to contribute 25 per cent of its cost and the Bundestag is having to assess the repercussions of cancellation.

Research fields likely to receive more than a 5.2 per cent increase include coal, radioactive waste disposal, micro-electronics, biotechnology and polar research. The likely losers include transport, building, space research and the large nuclear research centres. University building is also to be reduced and savings will be made at the Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron (DESY) by reducing the operating time of PETRA, the electron-positron machine. In all fields, the aim is to cut spending on development in favour of research.

The universities will nevertheless be affected to some extent. The ministry helps to support some specific university projects even though most of the money comes from Länder and from the Deutsches

Forschungsgemeinschaft, the chief source of funds for university research. The Länder, which support the basic infrastructure including staff salaries, are also cutting increases in their budgets, but they are limited by their commitment to keep tenured staff in employment. The Forschungsgemeinschaft's budget is intended to increase from DM780 million in 1980 to DM830 million in 1981, an increase of 6.4 per cent.

In a revision of the forward plan to 1983, savings of DM2,000 million on the entire federal government research budget are planned for the next three years. The Bundestag's deliberations on the research budget will last for another few months, but a radical departure from the proposals is unlikely.

**Judy Redfern**

## Polish students sit in at universities

Poland now also has its student sit-ins. At the University of Lodz, 6,000 students drawn from the university, the technical university and the medical school have so far been involved in a sit-in which began in mid-January. The academic work of these establishments is virtually paralysed. The students' demand is for university autonomy and a less rigid curriculum.

Lodz is not unique. At the end of November, there was a sit-in lasting several days at the University of Warsaw, while in January some 200 final-year students of the Wroclaw agricultural academy held a sit-in over issues such as the system of examinations and credits. In particular, they demanded that the present system of rigid lectures and examinations in "socio-political sciences" should be replaced by informal seminars.

The issue of "socio-political" teaching is one of the fifty-odd grievances of the Lodz protesters. The range of their complaints is considerable and, as the Minister of Science, Higher Education and Technology, Janusz Gorski, said after talks with the university senate last week, many of them are impractical. A maximum of 3 months military service for students, for example, would be meaningless. The most striking feature of the Lodz protest, however, is not the range of demands but the range of participants; the action is backed not only by the new Independent Students' Association and the Solidarity chapters of the academic staff, but also by the university party committee and the "old" organizations — the Association of Polish Socialist Students and the Union of Polish Teachers.

The Lodz protest is a symptom of discontent that runs throughout all Polish academic life. Implementation of the Gdansk Accords, signed at the end of the summer, is slow, and delays in drafting new bills on academic autonomy and the reduction of censorship to the minimum

needs of national security have evoked much anxiety that the terms of the accords may remain paper pledges only.

Thus the censorship bill, promised for 30 November, which is to take academic publishing out of the censors' control, has not yet appeared, even though the extended deadline of 15 January has been passed. Two draft bills have in fact been produced — one by the Minister of Justice, Jerzy Bafia, and one by a "public drafting committee", headed by Warsaw philosopher Dr Klemens Szaniawski. The problem of reconciling the two has become bogged down in the question of accountability. Minister Bafia would like the Office of Press, Publications and Performances (the censorship) to remain, as now, accountable to the Council of Ministers (the Cabinet). Dr Szaniawski's committee, however, wants it to be answerable to the Sejm (Parliament). Many of the proposals for "social renewal" put forward in recent months have called for the Sejm to play a more active role in the political life of the country.

In the absence of legislation, some universities have been quietly making their own reforms. Some rectors have made available to their students the university holdings of "restricted" texts.

Anomalies inevitably abound. Thus last week the Procurator General's office warned that issuing uncensored publications still carries a potentially heavy gaol sentence. Yet a few days previously, the censors had passed an issue of the Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny* which described lectures given in Gdansk by the clandestine "Society for Academic Courses" (Flying University) — lectures which, in pamphlet form, are regularly published by the underground press.

Censorship is only one of the burning academic issues. Dr Aleksander Gieysztor, the newly elected president of the Polish Academy of Sciences, sees the