

Abstract

After the Christian democratic CDU party was forced into the opposition after the parliamentary elections of 1969 it created a program commission which should update the party's Berlin Program adopted few months earlier. Surprisingly it drafted a wholly new party manifesto challenging crucial dogmas of party's policies which led to stormy discussions. This thesis argues that this development was a consequence of generation change in the party which was accelerated by the loss of government power as well as a result of the influence of the chairman of the program commission, Helmut Kohl. Kohl was a leading figure of the young rising generation in the party and a strong proponent of party reform. He created conditions in the commission for creation of a progressive proposal by giving influence to talented young reform oriented politicians. But the conservatives in the party were still strong enough to fight back and moderate the reform impetus of the draft. Party committee redrafted it and weakened some central progressive statements. Only the undisputable loss in the elections of 1972 and following election of Helmut Kohl to party chairman made the way free for a thru party

reform. Many of the young politicians allied with Kohl during the program discussion in early 1970s became eventually key figures in the CDU. Some of the themes which appeared in the program draft were further developed during the '70s. That is why this paper describes the discussion on the so called Second version of the Berlin Program as the overture of the CDU of 1970s.

Keywords

Federal Republic of Germany, CDU, Berlin program, Helmut Kohl, political party, party program, opposition, generation, semiotics