

British Lead Press Panic

West German press coverage of the 25-year trade and economic cooperation agreement signed by Bonn and Moscow this week was so inaccurate that the government of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt officially upbraided the British-directed campaign of press smears against the agreement. On May 9, the Chancellor's office issued a statement reading in part, "We are disappointed at the pettiness and total lack of historical perspective on political developments" currently displayed by the press. Selected outraged howls by London's conduits in West Germany, the U.S. and Great Britain, follow:

The Daily Telegraph (London) editorial, "Brezhnev Draws a Blank," May 9:

We must never lose sight of the fact that the main aim of Russian policy is to undermine Germany's loyalty to NATO and confidence in its protective effectiveness. To Russia this remains the unique "Open Sesame" to world domination, whatever peripheral schemes and adventures are pursued elsewhere....

Yet as Russia's military superiority on their doorstep grows, men's minds could begin to play strange tricks in rationalizing away unpleasant realities....

Chancellor Schmidt had to stand firm while taking care not to be inflexible, unreasonable or provocative to the mighty Soviet Czar (Brezhnev)....

Mr. Brezhnev gave nothing away either.... One thing he did get in Bonn was a 25-year agreement on economic cooperation and that he needed very badly. If it is not forthcoming, the screw will turn. But it will anyhow.

(London and Manchester) Guardian, May 5:

In his only public speech so far Mr Brezhnev has made an eloquent appeal for peaceful coexistence based no longer on the balance of fear and terror, but on trust and confidence between nations. He said that he recognized this requires work and not just words, especially in the area of arms control and disarmament.

But he also tried to drive a wedge between the U.S. and its Western allies. Renewing his call for a negotiated ban on the neutron bomb, he described this weapon as "an ominous gift of Dani" (the ancient Greeks) that is being offered "to the people of our continent."

(London) Observer, May 7:

The West German and Soviet leaders signed a 25-year agreement on economic cooperation which diplomats here see as a hint from Moscow about where Germany's long-term interests lie.

The Soviet Union has more to offer West Germany than supplies of oil, natural gas and uranium. It also holds the key to the reunification of Germany.

The thought that Moscow and Bonn might ever see eye to eye on this delicate matter is of course deeply upsetting to many other countries in Europe: a case of

possible Soviet-German trust inspiring the greatest possible mistrust elsewhere.

Financial Times, May 8 "Brezhnev completes Bonn discussions" by Adrian Dicks:

Mr. Leonid Brezhnev, the Soviet President and Communist Party leader, flew home to Moscow from Hamburg this afternoon at the end of a four-day visit to West Germany which appears to have left both Governments at least officially satisfied, even though relatively little progress has been made on specific issues....

The most tangible result of the visit is the long-term economic agreement between the two governments, which aims to double bilateral trade during the period 1976-80 compared to the previous five years.

Soviets Call British Bluff

In response to British press lies about the USSR-West Germany treaty, the Soviet party paper *Pravda* has singled out the most scurrilous British newspaper, the *Daily Telegraph* for attack, linking the paper to the efforts of Tory leader Margaret Thatcher and British Chief of Defense Staff Neil Cameron to poison East-West relations.

Pravda commentator Vladimir Shelkov berated the *Telegraph* for its manufacture of "blatant anti-Soviet fabrications," adding that the newspaper has consistently distorted Soviet foreign policy, retailing instead "certain portions of falsehood" each day. "The actions of the *Daily Telegraph* and those who stand behind them reflect the general line of right-wing circles in Great Britain toward undermining the process of detente," said *Pravda*.

The article denounced British Conservative Party leader Margaret Thatcher and British RAF head Neil Cameron (from whom the Soviets earlier called for an official apology over his anti-Soviet efforts in China) for sowing "enmity and suspicions in relations between European peoples" and engaging in a campaign to "misinform public opinion."

Predictably, the *Daily Telegraph* put out an editorial the next day, describing results of the Brezhnev-Schmidt talks as a "blank" and accused the Soviets of trying to "detach" West Germany from NATO as part of its "unique Open Sesame to world domination."

As a safety measure, Romanian officials have barred a reporter from the London *Times* from entering the country, due to the newspaper's "incorrect reporting." The exclusion order comes a month before Romanian President Ceausescu is scheduled to visit Britain.

Le Monde (Paris), editorial, May 9, "No Surprises In Brezhnev Visit to Bonn":

The same event can engender diametrically opposed interpretations. It is so with the trip Mr. Brezhnev has just made to West Germany: while West German observers see no new element out of this trip, the Soviet press is designating it to its readers as "the most important event of the year" which will "determine" for a long period the development of relations between the USSR and the BRD and serve the cause of the reinforcement of peace.

These divergences should come as no surprise. The important thing for the Soviets in this trip without surprises, is that it took place....Nothing in the results of

West Germany: "Totally New Perspective"

Interview with a board member of VDO, a manufacturer of armaments and machine tools in Frankfurt, West Germany:

Q: Are you aware of Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's "Grand Design" plan and how it connects to the Brezhnev visit?

A: I am fully aware of the importance of the Brezhnev visit. I also know that what the press is writing about the visit is all crap, but the really important people know what is going on.

Q: How are you planning to get around this press blackout?

A: What we want to do is to get a joint press campaign going with the VDMA (the association of German machine tool manufacturers). It will consist of an advertising campaign around the theme "Progress Creates Jobs." This will first of all counterattack the zero growths, and also stress the importance of trade with foreign countries.

Interview with Messer Griesheim, board member of a mechanical engineering and chemicals firm in Frankfurt, West Germany:

Q: What is your opinion of the results of the Brezhnev visit?

A: This visit was urgently needed. Qualitatively, much more was accomplished than ever before. The atmosphere between both countries is really pretty good now.

Q: But a lot more will be needed to end the depression, true?

A: Yes, but look at it this way. If the problems of the West can be solved in the way that Schmidt and Brezhnev solved their problems, then there may be some hope again, and we will have a totally new perspective.

his trip announces a Soviet initiative capable of unblocking the situation: the communiqué, the joint declaration, and the framework accord for economic cooperation signed in Bonn are not capable of hiding in their impressive number of pages the meagerness of results obtained.

Washington Post, May 7, "Brezhnev Urges End to Arms Race" by Michael Getler:

Otto Wolff von Amerongen, chief of the powerful West Germany Industry and Trade Council, said yesterday the new treaty was "not an historical agreement," as the Bonn government called it. There was scepticism here generally over the results of the Brezhnev trip.

The influential Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung stressed the lack of concrete progress achieved on key issues, such as disarmament, in a front-page editorial today. It said the visit was not likely to go down as an event of historic importance. "The reality is far more prosaic," it said.

Referring to the surprise with which Bonn officials were caught when Brezhnev, after years of delay, finally decided to come here, the paper said "four weeks ago, no one even had the idea of a long-term economic accord which, having been rapidly stitched together, is now being portrayed as a miracle."

Washington Post, May 6 "Brezhnev-Schmidt Talks Seen Stalled" by Michael Getler:

Lengthy private talks here yesterday between Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt centered on disarmament, but yielded no signs of progress and apparently included a Soviet refusal to trade any of its military superiority in Europe for a U.S. ban on neutron weapons...

There was also some West German words of caution with respect to trends in trade between the two European powers, a subject that is of interest to the Kremlin....

Today the two leaders will sign the most positive step coming out of these talks, a new 25-year "framework" for economic cooperation.

But Bonn's economic spokesman said yesterday that in trade talks also going on here, the West Germans had expressed some concern about the increasing Soviet tendency to demand that Bonn accept repayment in so-called compensatory or barter goods.

New York Times, May 7:

At first, the West Germans indicated they saw no particular reason for the visit. But then the Russians proposed the 25-year pact on economic and industrial cooperation, to be signed in Bonn, and the West Germans agreed.

New York Times, May 9:

Five years ago, Mr. Brezhnev's plea in Bonn for the West German and Soviet peoples to put an end to "a history full of sorrows" seemed genuine and moving.

Today, public opinion in West Germany seems more skeptical....

Mr. Brezhnev, the first Soviet leader to set foot on West German soil, journeyed to Bonn in 1973, and to Washington only a month later. The political climate was warmer in both places then than it has been in either for many months now.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, May 5:

In a major editorial, this newspaper warned that it is high time to get rid of all current misunderstandings between Bonn and Washington. America may end up losing all of Europe, and then the Federal Republic of Germany would be standing all alone, helplessly, against the East. This would create a policy vacuum "into which only those who still believe they can follow Bismarck's approach of seeking their future in the East, would stop."

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, May 6:

It was no secret that the financing of the big deals with the Soviets will not be that easy....Even the nuclear cooperation deal, wanted by the Soviets, is not included in the package — the stress is merely on Third World cooperation.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, May 8, "The Myth of Military Detente," by Adalbert Weinstein:

Detente has been merely a useful play for the Soviets up to now; the East is on the offense, while the West is

still defensive. Kissinger's illusion was that the understanding of détente would be identical in both East and West, but the Soviets understood it as merely a means to achieve generous terms of trade with the West.

Another article reads in part:

The Germans would have liked to tell Brezhnev more of what he wanted to hear.... But under present conditions this was not allowed. These conditions began to be created in 1938, when Germany destroyed its neighboring nations which acted as buffer states.... Now we have that uncanny neighbor relationship with a giant continental empire and with its specific political system.... The so-called intimacy of the two cannot get any closer.... For Bonn, the Brezhnev speech did not obliterate the fact that his peace is the peace of automatic killer-rifles placed at our eastern border.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, May 9:

The behavior of the Federal Republic of Germany was such as to awaken irritating memories of Rapallo....

Die Welt, May 9:

Unnamed NATO officials, according to this paper, are "irritated by Bonn's recent behavior." Bonn, they say, seems not to understand what Brezhnev's real intentions are: he is concentrating on the weakening of Bonn's position for the upcoming NATO summit meeting, and is harping on the weakness of the American president.

U.S. Looks For An Opening

While Hodding Carter III, the State Department's press spokesman, gave out once, twice, then thrice a "no comment" at press briefings this week on the world-historical West German-Soviet accord, news of the momentous accord drew the following responses in Washington and elsewhere around the country:

A top aide to Frank Weil of the Commerce Department:

This is really nothing new.... West German-Soviet economic relations have reached the point where no real breakthroughs are possible.... You can only have the working out of final details of already-concluded deals.... If you write a story saying something significant took place, you'll be misleading your readers.

An aide to Senator Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.):

We're too busy here dealing with labor reform and other important matters like that — I couldn't possibly get the Senator's response on this.

A New York executive connected to the Council on Foreign Relations:

I can certainly understand why London doesn't like this....

A business source close to the intelligence community:

I have the same reaction to this as you do. Brezhnev

has even called for the Warsaw Pact lowering its forces in Europe, which undercuts Paul Nitze and that whole "Team B" crowd.

A former U.S. Export-Import bank official:

This must be used as an example of how the U.S. will be left in the dust unless it increases East-West trade.... We must use it against the people who are blocking such things.

Official at the Commerce Department:

This is extremely important. I agree about its significance. It must have been stopped "at the top" because nobody in our departments was told about it.

An assistant to U.S. Special Trade Negotiator Robert Strauss:

This must be being handled only by the President, because we normally get briefed on things like this — but we don't know anything. It really sounds historic....

A Teamsters official:

...This will mean thousands and thousands of jobs, for years and years.

A Republican Ward Captain in Buffalo:

This is an opening we must get in on, a new alternative for the world.