

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Phase change in anti-NATO movement

The Easter marches showed that the unions and Social Democrats are now backing anti-U.S. demonstrations.

An estimated half-million demonstrators went into West Germany's streets during the April 21-22 Easter weekend. Their targets were NATO, the United States, and the U.S. effort to counter the Warsaw Pact's buildup of intermediate-range missiles.

More visibly than during the mass protests of October 1983, the Social Democrats (SPD) joined hands with the German Communist Party (DKP) and the Greens against the "scorched-earth plans of the United States for Europe," i.e., the ongoing stationing of Pershing II and cruise missiles which began at the end of last year.

At one of the main demonstrations, in Duisburg, the SPD's Erhard Eppler (who, by the way, was one of the 50 privileged Germans allowed to attend Henry Kissinger's Harvard Strategic Seminars in the late 1950s) lashed out against the Reagan administration.

Never before in U.S. history had there been such a "policy disaster" as the stationing of the Euromissiles, Eppler said, and called for "upgraded resistance against this organized insanity."

Observers of the demonstrations noticed that the churches were more in the background this time, while the labor movement's leftists played a larger and more public role than they did during the "hot autumn" of 1983.

This seemed to reflect a shift of political views among the labor bureaucrats, who have recently been in intense contacts with prominent Soviet officials.

In mid-March, the chairman Soviet Labor Union Federation, Stephan Shalajev, met with the chairman of the West German Federation of Labor, Ernst Breit, for a full day of discussions; at about the same time, the chairman of the Metal Workers Union (the strongest in Germany, with 2.5 million members), Hans Mayr, was in Moscow for discussions on "peace and disarmament issues" with Soviet representatives.

Mayr and Breit are members of the SPD, whose general manager, Peter Glotz, responded to growing membership criticism of the pro-communist trends in both the SPD and DGB with the statement that "there is no need to draw a line between us and the Communists."

The new pact between the SPD, the DKP, and the Soviets on the anti-NATO issue became public when leading Christian Democrat Jürgen Todenhöfer, his party's spokesman on disarmament questions, accused the Easter marchers of being "Moscow's useful idiots." Julius Lehlbach, an SPDer who chairs the DGB in Rhineland-Palatinate, the West German state hosting most of the U.S. Army GIs stationed on German territory, responded by accusing Todenhöfer of reviving "slogans of the Nazis."

The anti-NATO mobilization is not confined to verbal extremism. The use of violent language, which more and more recalls Moscow's anti-American rhetoric, reflects an orientation toward violence on a broader scale.

A week before the Easter march-

es, police found the railway tracks leading to the U.S. air base at the Frankfurt airport destroyed: Not only were the rails blocked by cement blocks, but at one point they had even been raised by brute force—probably by use of a hydraulic lift.

It was by mere accident that the police, alerted by security officials' overall warnings, discovered the sabotage attempt; what if a U.S. military transport had been derailed?

The U.S. Army barracks of Garlstedt (near Bremen) in Germany's northwest were the scene of massive riots outside the camp's gates, and police had to use water hoses and arrest 160 demonstrators in order to clean up the site.

The confrontation buildup was most dangerous at the U.S. Army camp in Mutlangen, Baden-Württemberg, where Pershing II missiles have been stationed.

While radicals cut the fences around the camp at several locations, 30 activists intruded into the site and approached the hall where the Pershing II missiles were believed to be stored.

It was at this point that a U.S. guard fired two shots at the group, to stop them. If he had hurt even one, the so-called peace movement would have had its long-awaited anti-NATO martyr.

The 30 activists, whose aim quite obviously was to provoke such an incident, were arrested.

Given the actions of the increasingly radicalized anti-NATO movement and of the Soviet military—as witness the ongoing Soviet provocations in the air corridor over Berlin—the Easter weekend of 1984 must be evaluated as the first step in a new phase of Soviet and Soviet-inspired provocations against the U.S. military presence in Germany.