

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Brandt gets his orders from Gorbachov

Even the Red Army chieftains turned out to meet with Brandt, to plan strategy against the Western alliance.

President Reagan was right to reject a meeting with Social Democratic Party (SPD) chairman Willy Brandt in Bonn on May 5. Hearing anti-American barrages daily from the propaganda mills in Moscow, there was no reason for him to listen to it all again from Brandt.

The Soviets are grooming Brandt's Social Democrats to oust the government of Christian Democratic Chancellor Helmut Kohl, to pull West Germany out of the Western alliance, and to nip in the bud the tentative moves from Bonn toward cooperation with the U.S. Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). During a flurry of diplomatic activity May 21-29, Brandt received his marching orders on this score directly from the Kremlin—including the "peace-loving" Red Army brass.

First, on May 21, Brandt and his *alter ego* Egon Bahr (the architect of the Social Democrats' strategic policies, including Brandt's famous *Ostpolitik* of the early 1970s) arrived in Paris to meet Lionel Jospin, the chairman of the French Socialist Party, and other French party leaders. A common platform was adopted, denouncing the SDI as an attempt to "militarize space," and calling for a "European alternative in defense and economics, monetary and technology policies."

In the German weekly *Der Spiegel* published the previous day, Bahr had revealed what this was really about: Europe should stay out of the SDI, but work on a strictly non-military space project, and the French and British should strike a deal with Moscow which would make American nuclear weapons in Western Europe "expensive."

This was, wrote Bahr, what Brandt wanted to discuss with Soviet leaders.

Arriving in Moscow on May 26, Brandt was accorded high honors. The next morning, with Bahr in tow, the Brandt delegation had a three-hour session with General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov, Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko, and Central Committee officials Boris Ponomaryov, Vadim Zagladin, and A. Aleksandrov-Agentov. This was followed by a "private" session among Brandt, Bahr, Gromyko, and Gorbachov, lasting another five hours. In the evening, Moscow television covered the meetings as the leading news item for about 20 minutes—play-up hardly accorded any Communist leader lately.

Brandt presented himself as a staunch adversary of the SDI, and of American policy in Central America and the Third World. He told Gorbachov that Western Europe needed a security policy which could only be based on "partnership" with Moscow, and accused President Reagan of "cheating the peoples at the Geneva talks."

Then Brandt presented his design for a Europe free of nuclear and chemical weapons, which would, he said, see its Eastern and Western parts "collaborating in science, economics, technology, and ecology."

Gorbachov replied with lavish praise of Brandt's former role as chancellor in "the planting of good seeds"—the *Ostpolitik*—and spoke of Europe as "our common roof." Hailing the Social Democrats as comrades of the Communists in the workers' struggle

against capitalism, he declared: "In spite of all remaining ideological differences, Communists and Socialists should collaborate in finding the solution to the most essential problems in our time."

Brandt and Gorbachov agreed to form a joint working group of the German Social Democrats and Soviet Communists on questions of disarmament, opposition to the SDI and chemical warfare, and Third World policy. The group will have its first official session in Bonn in September, and the delegations will be headed by Bahr and Ponomaryov.

The day after his meeting with Gorbachov, Brandt caucused again with Ponomaryov, discussing Third World issues, the world debt crisis, the dollar economy, and the role of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. While the details of these talks were not released, the two agreed that "collaboration" on these matters should be intensified.

While Brandt and Gorbachov met in Moscow, the German Social Democrats and Italian Communists met for a strategy symposium in West Berlin, and European member parties of Brandt's Socialist International met in Paris to discuss issues like "European self-assertion against the dollar" and "alternatives to the SDI." The demand is on the table now that Europe set up its own, independent monetary system with a reserve currency unit of its own. The Socialist International has made this proposal, and the Soviets endorse it, naturally, because it fits their own drive to split Western Europe from the United States economically.

Brandt's sojourn in Moscow concluded on May 29 with a meeting with Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, the Chief of the Soviet General Staff. What did they discuss? "Peace and disarmament"!