

# Burt linked to Soviet spy ring

by Criton Zoakos

On Sept. 5, three days prior to his arrival in Bonn, the new U.S. ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany, Richard Burt, was ordered by the State Department to remain silent on questions about his involvement with Soviet and East German spies now identified in the growing "espionage scandal" in West Germany.

In the course of a pre-trial deposition of Ambassador Burt held at the State Department office of John Kornblum, Richard Burt was questioned by attorney James Lesar on his relation with Reinhard Liebetanz, an official of the counter-intelligence section of the West German Bundesverfassungsschutz, the Federal Office for Defense of the Constitution. Reinhard Liebetanz is currently under investigation for being a spy for the Soviet Union. Liebetanz is known to have worked in the past both with Richard Burt as undersecretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, and with other State Department subordinates of Burt.

When questioned about these relations, during his Sept. 5, 1985 pre-trial deposition, State Department attorney John Burch instructed Ambassador Burt to "not answer the question." The State Department attorney further instructed Burt, who was testifying under oath, to not answer a whole series of other questions by the deposing attorney which were relevant to numerous past Burt associations with Soviet intelligence activities.

Richard Burt's deposition was part of the pre-trial procedures of the *Ogden vs. Powell* lawsuit which will be tried in court later this year. Mr. Ogden, the plaintiff, is seeking \$20,000 in damages he suffered as a result of a violent physical assault by Mr. Powell, a fervent admirer of Richard Burt who, in the course of a public speech by Burt, objected violently to Mr. Ogden's characterization of Burt as a traitor to the United States. Ambassador Burt's involvement in the trial is twofold: He was a principal witness to the assault suffered by Mr. Ogden and his reputation was, obviously, the assailant's bone of contention.

## Burt and the Soviet spies

The State Department's instruction to Burt to not answer questions about his relations and past cooperation with the now exposed East German and Soviet espionage network in Bonn will raise more questions than it lays to rest. From

publicly available, unclassified information, the following facts are known about these of Burt's relations:

Reinhard Liebetanz, a spy for the Soviets rather than the East Germans, was in charge of surveilling "right-wing extremist" political organizations in West Germany. In this capacity, Liebetanz was in regular communication with Burt's European Affairs Section of the State Department, and with the Office of Special Investigations of the Justice Department, the DOJ's so-called "Nazi-hunting unit." Liebetanz would receive fake documents, doctored up by his KGB controllers, pertaining to the political past of persons living in the West for whom the KGB wished to create problems for one reason or another. Liebetanz would subsequently pass these documents on to Burt's section of the U.S. State Department if the documents were about persons living in the United States. Burt's section would then pass the KGB doctored documents to the Office of Special Investigations which would initiate action against the individuals targeted by the Soviet KGB.

One well-known such case was that of the NASA physicist Dr. Arthur Rudolph. Dr. Rudolph was one of the German scientists who, during the war, had worked at the Peenemünde ballistics center. After the war, he came to the United States, joined the American rocket program and made major scientific contributions to NASA. After President Reagan announced his Strategic Defense Initiative in 1983, Dr. Rudolph moved to offer his contributions to our ballistic missile defense program.

At that point, the Soviet KGB, through Liebetanz, passed on to the State Department forged documents for the purpose of manufacturing a fake argument about Rudolph's "Nazi past," which subsequently gave rise to a campaign from Richard Burt's office, to have Dr. Rudolph stripped of his U.S. citizenship. The matter ended sadly when Dr. Rudolph, rather than undergo the indignities of an OSI witchhunt, voluntarily gave up his U.S. citizenship and went back to Germany.

Another area of concern is Richard Burt's probable collaboration with Hans Joachim Tiedge, the head of West Germany's counterespionage section dealing with East Germany who defected to East Germany on Aug. 19. It will be recalled that Richard Burt on June 11, 1985, in his capacity as undersecretary of state for European affairs and nominee for U.S. ambassador to West Germany, presided, in an ostentatious manner, over a spectacular "spy exchange" over Berlin's Glienicke Bridge where all East-West spy exchanges take place. During the night of the exchange, where four East German spies imprisoned in West Germany were exchanged for 24 Westerners in East German prisons, Burt was presented on German television as the man who had, for months, masterminded the exchange. For this, his cooperation with the defector, Hans Joachim Tiedge, the counterespionage chief, should have been extensive indeed.