

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

How nice is the Red Army?

Something is very rotten in the carrots Gorbachov keeps offering to Germany.

After the Reykjavik summit, which discredited the Soviet position and brought the West German government close behind President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative policy, Mikhail Gorbachov knows that he has to find new cards to play, if he is to win the West Germans away from the SDI again.

The cards being played are "prospects for broadened economic cooperation" and "cultural relations." The aim is to make West Germans forget that there is such a threatening thing as the Red Army, which has 400,000 men, almost as many as the total West German army, under arms on the East German border.

There is immense cultural activity going on between the Soviets and West Germany these days, presenting the Russians' "nice" side. Some 16 cities in the state of Baden-Württemberg held "Soviet Culture Weeks" in mid-October, and there are Russian ballet troupes, always "very impressive," deployed into other cities, too. Soviet "new movies," centered around stories of a world after a nuclear war, around environmental and soap-opera-like stories of "genuine Russian religiosity," are being shown to West German audiences, and seem to have been produced just for this purpose.

The Kremlin rulers know that many Germans have fallen for the propaganda image of the Russians as a "very emotional, nature-loving, and deeply religious people." In stark contrast to the official Soviet black propaganda against alleged "revanchists in West Germany," a ranking delega-

tion of the Supreme Soviet under Vice-Minister President Batalin, toured West Germany a few days after Reykjavik, and stated: "We like this country very much!"

For those West Germans who do not fall for this all that easily, the Soviets also play an "economic card." They speak of a "new phase of economic cooperation," of a larger West German share in coming Five-Year Plans, and advertise the new chances offered by Gorbachov's "economic reforms."

One week after Reykjavik, Igor Guriev of the IMEMO institute, came to Bonn to brief politicians and industrialists on Gorbachov's policy of "far-reaching liberalization in Soviet trade with the West." Individual government agencies and businesses in the Soviet Union would be permitted to sign direct contracts with partners in the West, and would like to do so especially with partners in West Germany. Guriev's remarks were treated as "sensational." Less attention was paid, however, to the fact that he arrived at the invitation of Kurt Biedenkopf, a ranking member of the West German section of the Trilateral Commission, which has been parroting Moscow's propaganda warning that West German cooperation with President Reagan's SDI would "ruin the prospects of extended trade relations with the Soviets."

Prospects of extended trade alone would not move the West Germans away from the SDI. Linked to it, therefore, is the carrot of German reunification.

It was very striking, in this regard, to see an essay in the liberal daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* of Oct. 22, dealing with exactly this linkage. The basic point was stated at the beginning of the essay. On Moscow's mind are three things: "There is, first, the American presence in Germany, second, the integration of West German potential into the Western Alliance, and third, the emergence of a new national movement among Germans for the reunification of their country."

The essay continued, a bit later: "It is quite obvious, therefore, that from the viewpoint of Soviet power interests, one day consideration could be given to solving the third factor and thus removing the other two factors. . . ." The Soviets would offer reunification to the Germans on the condition that West Germans leave NATO. The West Germans would gain, in this reunified, "neutral" Germany, an "excellent chance for long-term and comprehensive economic cooperation with the Soviet Union and the Eastern economic community, which could lead into a long-term political alliance with the Soviet Union.

"Should it succeed, by the re-establishment of German national unity by the end of this century, in achieving a European order pleasing to its security interests more than the *status quo*," concluded the essay, "the Soviet Union would have achieved an historical victory of immeasurable weight."

There is not much one could add to this. But the author of the essay, Prof. Wolfgang Seiffert of the University of Kiel, was an East German economist of considerable rank, who only "moved west" eight or nine years ago!

Some sources in Bonn say that by relying on such exile "co-thinkers," Moscow may gain even more than by direct propaganda.