

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### Sabotage of the chemical industry?

*Recent oil spills, chemical explosions, and such "accidents" play into the hands of Moscow and the Greens.*

Since Nov. 1, West Germany's chemical industry has been haunted by one catastrophe after the other. The country's main rivers—the Rhine and the Main—are being polluted by highly toxic substances and liquids almost daily. All of the big names of Germany's chemical industry, such as Hoechst, Bayer, and BASF, have appeared in daily media headlines.

What is the likelihood of sabotage in this series of "accidents"?

The catastrophes began on Nov. 1, with a huge fire at Sandoz Basel Corp., a Swiss agro-chemical plant located on the German-Swiss border. The fire produced a leak of toxic substances into the Rhine, killing tens of thousands of tons of fish and producing a "water panic" in all the regions directly bordering on the river. The ecologist Green Party hurried to call for a halt to "production of toxic chemicals." (For the anti-industrial Greens, all chemical production is "toxic," and they and the ecologist wing of the Social Democrats are quick to denounce "the chemical section of the military-industrial complex.")

From inside the Sandoz management, initial statements pointed to the possibility of "sabotage."

Then, a few days after the fire, a letter was dropped into the mail-boxes of news agencies in Basel: a so-called Swiss Group of the Red Army Faction (RAF) claimed responsibility for an arson attack against Sandoz, charging the company with being "an arm of chemical warfare production." The RAF is the most dangerous German

terrorist group.

The Sandoz management decided to officially deny all connections between the fire and terrorism, however, and coverage of RAF involvement had died away by mid-November. But this did not solve the mystery.

The question was brought up again in statements by several West German political and industrial leaders. Christian Lenzer, a member of the Christian Democrats' parliamentary group in Bonn, said in an interview with *Bildzeitung*, a million-run daily newspaper, on Nov. 27: "No fewer than six major incidents in one month—this can't be accidental. I have the shocking suspicion that we have cases of sabotage here. Eastern agents have the order not only to spy on our industry, but also to disrupt it."

In the same newspaper, Hans-Joachim Langmann, president of the Chemical Industry Association, stated: "We probably have to think of sabotage." And Heribert Hellenbroich, until one year ago head of the West German counter-espionage division, said: "Radical environmentalist fanatics may have carried out sabotage to destroy the reputation of the chemical industry."

While the other two spokesmen did not specify their charges, Lenzer did in a private discussion with *EIR*, pointing to a mysterious "oil spill" on the Rhine River on Nov. 25, which had led to an international pollution alarm. *EIR* looked into this affair, and found evidence of sabotage, as well as on the role of the Green Party.

On Nov. 25, a routine patrol of the Hesse state water police detected an oil spill covering the Rhine between the cities of Wiesbaden and Geisenheim, over a distance of 13 kilometers. Hardly had the incident been detected, when the news agencies broadcast reports of "another heavy catastrophe," and the minister of environmental affairs of the state of Hesse, Josef "Joschka" Fischer, inspected the scene, declaring that an international pollution alarm had to be given. Fischer is a prominent member of the Green Party.

What were the facts? As police spokesmen told *EIR*, the "oil spill" affair was a case of sabotage: Since an empty 15-liter barrel was found on one of the islands in the Rhine River not far from the "catastrophe site," the conclusion to be drawn was that the barrel had been emptied into the river just seconds before the arrival of the water patrol. The oil spill was washed away by the current shortly after Minister Fischer had left the scene.

The timing of the spill, coinciding with the Green Party's arrival on the scene, was too close to be a mere "accident."

While sabotage by Soviet and East bloc special commando forces (spetsnaz) has not been proven in the current cases, there was ample evidence produced at a parliamentary hearing in Bonn on Sept. 24, of spetsnaz destruction of West Germany's industry.

A curious addendum: While all other meetings with Bonn officials were canceled by Moscow after the Reykjavik summit—in protest against statements by Chancellor Helmut Kohl comparing Mikhail Gorbachov to Joseph Goebbels—still a ranking Green Party delegation spent four days in Moscow in mid-November, meeting with government and Communist Party officials.