

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Foul deals betray East bloc Jews

The opening of official relations between the East German regime and West German Jews is tied to Bronfman's treachery.

On June 6, official relations between the East German regime and the Jews of Germany were established. The head of the German Jewish Council, Heinz Galinski, and East German leader Erich Honecker agreed to "open a new page in the book of German-Jewish relations in the postwar period." Honecker stated a commitment to pay up to \$100 million compensation to Jewish victims of Nazism.

Until now, the Soviet puppet regime in East Germany has always rejected any moral concern on the "Jewish question." When the West Germans, in a treaty between Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and Israel's leader David Ben-Gurion, agreed in 1952 to pay financial compensation to the Jews and Israel, as a gesture of German goodwill, the East Germans attacked this as a "plot between the Zionists and the finance-capital of West Germany."

And after the mass insurrection of workers in East Germany in June 1953, the regime there clamped down on Jewish members of the ruling Communist party as "agents of the Western imperialists." These were trumped-up charges, but it was true that Jews in East Germany kept in contact with Jewish relief organizations in the West.

To this date, the East German regime has had the Stasi—its secret police—continue repression against the small Jewish community. It was against this repression that the Chief Rabbi in East Germany, Isaac Neuman, protested on May 2, resigning after only nine months in office.

Against this background, the June 6 meeting between Galinski and Ho-

necker deserves special attention. Their talks included a tacit agreement that underground Western contact with Jews in East Germany be replaced by "official" relations, from now on.

In a related move, the Soviets charged Western Jewish organizations with violating tacit agreements on the emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union to Israel. Moscow charged that only 10% of the Jews leaving the Soviet Union (a total figure of 1,169 alone in May!) actually arrive in Israel. The other 90% prefer to live in Western Europe and the United States, because of the generally better living conditions. Moscow wants this to stop, or else.

All of this sheds some light on another recent affair. In mid-May, the media in Germany reported on the alleged mismanagement of Jewish funds under the late Werner Nachmann, the longtime head of the German Jewish Council, who died unexpectedly of a heart attack in January 1988. Perusing his books, lawyers found that he had diverted some DM33 million from compensation funds for Jewish Nazi victims. The money was laundered through Nachmann's 18 personal small enterprises, ending up in France, Switzerland, and Italy.

"Mismanagement, theft of funds!" shouted the media and spokesmen of the Jewish community in Germany. Nachmann had, however, not put the DM33 million into his enterprises—which he left in a state of bankruptcy when he died—but had funneled the money to the vast Jewish dissident underground in the East bloc.

This was well known to even those

Jewish officials who used the question marks in the Nachmann case to call for a purge of all his political networks in the German Jewish community. Among those who criticized the Nachmann operation the loudest in the media, was Heinz Galinski, the new head of the German Jewish Council, and Frankfurt-based mobster Ignaz Bubis, a figure tied into the Ariel Sharon-Edgar Bronfman networks of organized crime. The media campaign against Nachmann was led by journalist Ulrike Holler of the left-wing radio station, Hessischer Rundfunk. She used information based on tips by Bubis, and exclusive dossiers on Nachmann she obtained from the East Germans directly.

This brings us back to two other affairs. In the summer and autumn of 1987, Edgar Bronfman, head of the World Jewish Congress and an heir to the Seagrams' fortune, negotiated with the Soviets on Jewish affairs in the East bloc. This effort was backed by the U.S. State Department, in the context of the ongoing summit talks. One of those who opposed these special deals was Werner Nachmann, whose sudden death removed a chief obstacle for Bronfman inside the German Jewish community.

Then, on May 3, 1988, East German Politburo member Hermann Axen arrived in the U.S. for meetings and speaking engagements sponsored by the State Department. Axen, the highest East German party official to enter the United States since 1945, also met with representatives of the Jewish Claims Conference and Bronfman's World Jewish Congress.

The June 6 meeting between Galinski and Honecker proceeded in the political tracks of Bronfman's secret talks with the Kremlin leaders and their puppet regime in East Berlin: a sellout of East bloc Jews right in line with the INF sellout of Western defense.