

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### Renounce the Hitler-Stalin Pact!

*Pressure is building from the Soviet-occupied Baltic republics and from parliamentarians in Bonn.*

August 23 will be the 50th anniversary of the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939, whose secret protocols gave half of Poland and all of the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania away to Moscow. After an interlude of German military occupation (Poland from 1939 to the end of the war, the Baltic states from 1941 to 1944-45), these four nations came under Soviet imperial rule.

The issue has become so hot now, that even Poland's leader Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski recently gave an interview to the Communist party daily *Trybuna Ludu*, in which he recalled how the Soviets had deported him and his family as slaves to Siberia, along with 1.5 million other Poles.

Independence movements in the three Baltic republics, with certain support from their governments, and exile communities in the West, have issued a call for restoring full independence and sovereignty, to begin with the renunciation of the Hitler-Stalin Pact as being "against the basic rules of international law."

The Baltic call goes specifically to the address of the German governments in Bonn and East Berlin, and to the Kremlin.

The three governments have so far shown little response, but at least the new Soviet Congress of Deputies has come under heavy pressure, because the Baltic deputies there recently forced Gorbachov to establish a commission to investigate the pact.

The official Soviet position has so far been that 1) there was no such thing as a secret protocol, 2) the annexation

of the Baltic states by the Red Army just restored Russian rule to the status quo before World War I, 3) whatever happened after 1939 was justified by Stalin's aim to defend the Soviet Union against the Nazis, and 4) after the end of World War II, any attempt to touch the "borders as they are," would provoke World War III.

For more than 40 years, Moscow has had the tacit consent of the other "Yalta" powers, the United States and the United Kingdom, to fix the partition of Europe in this way.

But now this is changing: The publication in West Germany and France of the new book *Icebreaker*, by Soviet GRU defector Viktor Suvorov, describing Stalin's war plans of the summer of 1941, has corrected some of the false pro-Stalinist history on the outbreak of the world war. The book documents that both Moscow and Berlin had been preparing to go to war against each other since at least the date of signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact. It also shows that Stalin knew about and endorsed not only Hitler's war plans against Poland, but also his attack against the Western powers.

Certainly this book and the debate it has sparked internationally, came at an unwelcome time for Gorbachov, when Western experts are beginning to look into what the current restructuring of the Soviet military is actually about. The Kremlin decided to make concessions in that debate, in order to take off at least some of the pressure, and score some sympathy points with the West.

In a roundtable debate shown on

West Germany's Channel 2 TV on July 23, Gorbachov's German policy adviser (and former ambassador to Bonn) Valentin Falin became the first high Soviet official to ever admit that, "Although I don't view the source as above criticism, I do say that there can be no doubt about the existence of a secret protocol" to the Hitler-Stalin Pact.

This declaration, interpreted by many Kremlinologists as a "sensation," was taken with a grain of salt by others. Conservative Christian Democrat Hans Stercken, chairman of the foreign affairs commission of the parliament in Bonn, said on July 24 that Falin had "just admitted what has long been overdue, not least because of the pressure from the people of the three Baltic states."

Documents—embassy cables, secret intelligence reports, public warnings—concerning the pact and the secret protocols have actually been accessible in the West since 1939. Originals of some sections of the agreements of 1939 and 1940 are still in the files of the foreign ministry in Bonn, including five maps documenting how Hitler and Stalin drew the dividing lines through Poland and Eastern Europe, between their spheres of influence.

Stercken declared that the Hitler-Stalin Pact was against all rules of international law when it was signed, and that therefore it should finally be declared "null and void."

"It cannot be," Stercken said, "that two states decide on the fate of other nations, as this pact did in respect to the three Baltic states in 1939. . . . It is undoubtedly the turn of the Soviets now to take the next step and formally renounce the pact."

The same principle that Stercken cited here, also holds for the three-power Yalta agreements of 1945, which should be renounced before their own 50th anniversary in 1995.