

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

The Social Democrats vs. Reagan

Will Central America explode? Watch the moves of Willy Brandt and the Socialist International.

The beginning of November marked a drastic shift in the approach of the German Social Democrats to the United States: It was a shift from anti-American sentiment to open, Soviet-like hostility.

The process was begun by the party's chairman, Willy Brandt himself, who toured eight countries in Spanish-speaking America in October with the intention of sparking ferment against Reagan. Brandt's trip was crowned by visits to Havana and Managua.

After Brandt's return, the Social Democratic leadership in Bonn started to work on a platform for the new confrontation strategy against Reagan, whose re-election had been taken into account. The party's official weekly magazine, *Vorwärts*, set the tone with articles predicting a collapse in the value of the dollar by no later than spring 1985, and with features supporting the Cubans and Nicaraguans.

The incredible high point of this propaganda campaign was a review of a new play, *Judith*, whose plot deals with preparation of an assassination attempt against "the U.S. President" to prevent nuclear holocaust.

The Social Democrats may defend themselves: We are no assassins, nor is Willy Brandt. But they are energetically creating an environment in which the murder of the President, or any attempt on his life, would be handily explained as a "mere reaction to his fatal policies."

The main interest of the Social Democrats is that of Moscow, to exploit all opportunities for confronta-

tion with Reagan in such a way that the political and strategic decoupling of Europe from the United States is facilitated. Like the Soviets, the Social Democrats want an explosion in Central America, which they hope will force U.S. troop withdrawal from Western Europe.

On Nov. 2, the presidium of the Social Democrats passed a policy memorandum which denounced Reagan for planning "to bring Nicaragua down politically, militarily, and economically by means of pressure, threats, and aggression." The memorandum said that the Reagan administration's policy was to fund, train, and equip the contras against Managua.

But siding with the Jesuit command in Managua was not the real point: "The continuation of the previous Central American policy of the U.S.A. would consequently lead to a severe aggravation of the moral and political foundations of the Western Alliance." In other words: The Central American crisis will accelerate the decoupling of Europe from the United States.

On Nov. 3, a demonstration of about 20,000 peaceniks, pro-Nicaraguan solidarity groups, and other radicals in Bonn was honored by Willy Brandt's presence, and the speech he gave to this mob was again revealing: "Whoever expressed outrage over the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan yesterday, must not remain silent if the U.S.A. is funding enemies of the government of Nicaragua, mining ports,

and encouraging acts of sabotage in Central America."

Neither Brandt nor the SPD have ever "expressed outrage over the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan," which makes the point clear.

But more was yet to come: On Nov. 6, a sizeable battalion of Social Democrats in West Berlin marched together with several thousand Communists, radicalized churchniks, and other radicals in a "day of action against Reagan." The anti-Reagan manifesto which formed the political platform of the protesters read: "Not another four years of arms race and threats!" "Not another four years of U.S.A. interventionism in Central America!" "Not another four years of exploitation, unemployment, and impoverishment!"

Part of the ferment whipped up by Brandt and his like will go beyond mere slogans: It has been leaked that the radical metal-workers union, several radical-socialist sections of labor youth organizations, and young socialists of the Social Democratic Party will soon form "international solidarity brigades" which are to be shipped to Nicaragua this winter.

The last time the drums were beaten for the formation of such "international brigades" was between 1936 and 1939, when the Socialist International sent thousands of young men into battle against the armies of Generalissimo Franco in the bloody Spanish Civil War. Willy Brandt was a prominent coordinator of the "brigades" operation then.

It came as no surprise, therefore, when news leaks made the rounds in Bonn that the American administration has given orders to all its embassies abroad to watch "the moves of Willy Brandt and the Socialist International," especially in connection with the Central American region.