

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Kohl and Gorbachov 'break the ice'

Fifty leaders of German industry and banking accompanied the chancellor on his long-awaited Moscow summit.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's long-delayed summit meeting with Mikhail Gorbachov finally took place in Moscow Oct. 24-27, amid expectations of expansion of trade between the two countries. Kohl was accompanied by 5 government ministers and 50 leaders of banking and industry, who signed more than 30 business deals with the Soviets.

The deals included a \$540 million project to build a new type of nuclear reactor in the Soviet Union, and a 3.2 billion deutschemark credit line from Deutsche Bank. There were also state-to-state agreements on environmental protection, nuclear power plant safety, space cooperation, and food production.

This was a terrible time for Kohl to go to Moscow, in the midst of the U.S. election transition, and hence a leadership vacuum in the West. Maybe that was what Gorbachov had in mind when he told Kohl, "Now, the ice has been broken."

The Kremlin gives maximum significance to its "German flank," to driving a wedge between the West Germans and the United States.

This policy was underlined shortly before Kohl's Moscow trip by the appointment of former ambassador to Bonn (1971-78), Valentin Falin, as the new head of the Soviet Central Committee's international department. It is the first time that a Germany expert was made head of that crucial section of the Central Committee. Falin had played a leading role in drafting the 1971 Four-Power Agreement on Berlin.

The issue of Berlin—and hence the status of divided Germany—goes to the heart of the political relations between the two countries. When Gorbachov gave his official dinner speech at the reception for Kohl on Oct. 24, he restated the Soviet view of the Berlin problem. To Kohl's cautious remarks that "Berlin must be the touchstone of improvements in East-West relations," Gorbachov responded rudely that "those who say so" are playing a "dangerous game."

The profit from the Kohl trip is all on the Soviet side. At least half of Deutsche Bank's DM 3.2 billion will be used for "improvements in the supply of consumer goods for the Soviet population." It is no secret in Bonn that this phrase circumscribes Soviet plans for "emergency food buys in the West," to "stabilize Gorbachov in a critical internal power situation."

The Soviets are interested in German assistance in the building and modernizing of slaughterhouses, refrigeration and food storage complexes, production of cartons and cans, factories for food-processing and deep-freeze packaging technologies, as well as fertilizers, harvesting machinery, and other equipment to improve an increasingly desperate food situation in the Soviet Union.

No doubt Gorbachov and the Soviet leaders will capitalize on this German credit line, together with the other recent credits, totaling \$8 billion, which they have arranged with British, Italian, Japanese, and Swedish banks. More than the other Europeans, this agreement puts the Germans

on the Soviet hook. More than the other West European governments, all of whom have chosen a political course of appeasement toward Moscow as well, the German government in Bonn has sold out to illusions that "deals on the German Question can be made with the Soviets."

Germany is a priority target of the Soviet-controlled campaign of peace-niks against NATO. Remarks made by Gen. Vladimir Kryuchkov (then the head of KGB foreign intelligence, now the head of the KGB) at an internal Soviet Foreign Ministry conference at the end of July, made that clear. The Kryuchkov speech went unnoticed by most Soviet-watchers in Germany, because it was not published before Kryuchkov himself wrote an article for the October Russian-language issue of the monthly *Mezhdunarodaya Zhizn (International Affairs)*. Reviewing his July speech, Kryuchkov said that through the mobilization of the peace movement (this would emphatically include the German Social Democrats) and the Greens, the "brains of Western politicians" had been influenced in the Soviet direction, and that this work should be continued on a new level.

In Kryuchkov's article, the same phrase used by Gorbachov—"the ice is broken"—appeared in a telling context. "The practical steps that we have launched to break the ice in Western Europe have borne fruit," he wrote. "We have successfully changed people's minds. . . . The policy conducted by Gorbachov has been a big success. . . . We will continue to orient to the Greens and the peace movements . . . to put these people in the forefront, so as to influence the minds of the politicians."

Had Kohl understood this Moscow strategy, he would not have made his pilgrimage there at all.