

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Germans don't like the red flag

The media-promoted phenomenon of "Gorbymania" can't conceal a deep horror of communism.

The pictures on German TV during Gorbachov's visit to Bonn, seemed to prove international warnings that mass hysteria—Gorbymania—had captured the hearts of the West Germans. Admittedly, there were scenes of overwhelming applause for Gorbachov in Bonn. But to say that this marked support for the Soviet system, even a *reformed* one, is wrong.

The massacre in Beijing, the pogroms in Uzbekistan and other parts of the Soviet Union, left a deep shock upon the West Germans that can't be painted over by Raisa and Mikhail's public relations smiles. The Germans feel uneasy about Gorbachov—he may be a reformer, but he's a commie like Deng Xiaoping, isn't he? They also feel uneasy about the Bush administration's plans to pull troops out of Europe. Can there be safety without U.S. troops in Germany? Recent opinion polls say that a vast majority wants the troops to stay.

Many here wondered about remarks John C. Kornblum, deputy U.S. ambassador to NATO, made on the joint declaration Kohl and Gorbachov signed in Bonn June 13. In a TV interview, Kornblum called the declaration, which backs Gorbachov's idea of a Common European House, a "good document." He said that the Bush and Gorbachov visits to Germany, in a span of only two weeks, had set "the right framing conditions from both sides, which have to be filled by pragmatic policies, now." The message got across: With things settled by the two superpowers, Bonn's job was to get into line.

Unlike his Gorbachovite foreign minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Bonn Chancellor Helmut Kohl seems uneasy about the superpower deal. This is why he introduced a delicate subject in his dinner speech in Bonn June 12. Kohl said to the Soviet leader, "Mr. General Secretary, thoughts of peace are moving our own people very much this year. Fifty years ago, World War II began with the attack on Poland, which shortly before had been divided a fourth time in history by a shameful treaty."

Journalists later hit Gorbachov's spokesman Gennadi Gerasimov with requests for a comment on the 1939 Hitler-Stalin Pact Kohl had referred to in his speech, though not by name. "Why remember that pact," Gerasimov said, "why not also remember that Germany was the first country to make friends with the Soviet Union after the revolution? Why not remember the Rapallo pact?"

Observers could not help interpreting the big show of nice German-Soviet words before the the public and the media, as a coverup of real tensions. Some light on these tensions was shed in leaks Kohl's press spokesman made June 13, when he said the two leaders had, in the context of discussing the Common European House, also traded views on the "importance of the principle of non-interference." The spokesman was asked whether this meant that West German non-interference in the current turbulence in Eastern Europe, was discussed, and he replied, "Yes." He added that he didn't know whether the specific problem of

East Germany had been brought up, but he would say that it was "certainly included in this context."

On the German Question, i.e., reunification or whatever form of closer German-German relations was possible, Gorbachov did not make the least concession. Many here had expected that because of the Bonn government's good behavior on arms control, Gorbachov would make Kohl a new offer on the German Question, but he didn't. Instead, Gorbachov's German affairs adviser Nikolai Portugalov took to the media, making clear there had been no change of view.

"The most the West Germans can hope for, is two German apartments, with two independent tenants, in the future House of Europe," said Portugalov in a radio interview June 13. He added that both German tenants could develop "good neighborly relations, on the condition that both respect the house order."

Variations of this rebuff were repeated by other Soviet spokesmen while Gorbachov was in Bonn, and also the joint German-Soviet declaration stated on the highly sensitive issue of Berlin that no change would occur in the 1971 Four-Power Agreement. In the eyes of the Soviets, this agreement does not mean at all that relations between West Berlin and West Germany are recognized by Moscow. Gorbachov refused to sign two agreements (on shipping and on space research) in Bonn, because the two governments could not agree on an interpretation to include Berlin.

Finally, a senior member of the Soviet delegation was quoted in the press calling the joint declaration "largely symbolic," adding the telling phrase: "Our cooperation with the U.S. is much deeper and more specific." It is a U.S.-Soviet rope by which the West Germans are to be hung.