

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### The Berlin spy swap: a secret agenda

*Spies are exchanged across a Berlin bridge, but the melodrama masks a darker purpose.*

Two hidden agendas are lurking behind the U.S.-Soviet spy exchange which took place on Berlin's Glienicke Bridge on Feb. 11; both emanate from the U.S. State Department.

First, the Soviet release of "dissident" Anatolii Shcharanskii was intended to grease the skids of the rapprochement, long in the making, between Israel and the Soviet Union—with George Shultz's State Department cast in the role of marriage broker. A couple of second-rate spies were thrown in, to provide a suitable cover for the Israeli-Soviet deal.

The second hidden agenda is that for which the State Department's Richard Burt took the assignment of U.S. ambassador in Bonn last year: to push the Federal Republic toward a "New Yalta" accommodation with the Soviet Union and the East bloc.

From the American side, the "swap" was engineered by the Central Europe desk at State, whose head is Rozanne Ridgway, a personal friend of Burt and formerly stationed in East Germany. Ridgway is known for her advocacy of a "dialogue" with the Soviet-backed "ecofascist" party, the Greens, as well as for her promotion of increased contacts between East and West Germany.

Talking to European journalists two weeks before the agent swap, Ridgway mentioned that some "intensive dialogue" had been taking place with Eastern Europe, but especially with the East German regime. She would not say more about the nature of these talks, but added that they had led to "considerably good progress in

our relations to the German Democratic Republic."

The negotiations were handled by Burt and the current ambassador to East Berlin, Francis Meehan. Observers pointed out that Burt spent several days in Berlin prior to the agent swap. There was probably quite a bit more to discuss with the Russians and East Germans, than just the exchange of four or five agents from either side.

Burt's staff and the spokesman for West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Friedhelm Ost, revealed that the preparatory talks for the swap had taken "several months of concentrated effort."

Another State Department stalwart, John Kornblum, the head of the U.S. mission in West Berlin, told an audience of politicians in that city before Christmas, that the United States had some "sensitive, secret communication" going on with the East Germans. As a matter of fact, there are rumors in Bonn that the United States favors a visit by East German leader Erich Honecker to Bonn in 1986. This visit—the second-ever by an East German leader since 1945—is supposed to promote what is euphemistically called "a new phase of German-German relations."

This is the same as "new phase of détente" which is now in vogue in discussions among George Shultz, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, and the West European foreign ministers, prominently including Bonn's Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. What it means is a strategic settling of East-West affairs

in Europe, which would allow a substantial withdrawal of United States military presence from the continent. This agreement, generally referred to as "New Yalta," will mean an increase of Soviet influence over all of Europe.

While all of the established political parties in Bonn have accommodated to this policy, the opposition Social Democrats have been most outspoken about the strategic deal. The next convention of the Social Democrats in August, will debate a policy platform which calls for a phased withdrawal of U.S. military men, materiel, and missiles. Nevertheless, the Social Democratic candidate for chancellor in the upcoming national elections of January 1987, Johannes Rau, continues to deny in public that this platform holds weight with the party leadership. This is what Rau assured his American discussion partners, including President Reagan, during his U.S. visit Feb. 3-7. The State Department and the media are now presenting Rau—who until his recent conversion to "moderation," motivated by political ambition, was a leading light of the Social Democratic Party's left wing—as the "man of new realism."

Rau himself spared no efforts during his U.S. trip to present his views as being "in full compatibility with what was agreed at the Geneva summit." It seems his script was written by Richard Burt, who, as Rau's staff leaked, had played a very active role in bringing the Social Democrat to Washington.

As for the spy exchange, Bonn is evaluating it as "a signal that the spirit of Geneva is carrying the day." The handshake between Burt and Shcharanskii on Glienicke Bridge symbolized those hidden agreements which Shcharanskii may not even have been aware of—but Richard Burt certainly was.