

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Moscow's game with the German Jews

Behind the campaign to oust Bundestag leader Jenninger, are four decades of Soviet manipulation of Jews in the West.

The forced resignation Nov. 11 of parliamentary speaker Philipp Jenninger, over a trumped-up campaign on the "anti-Semitism" issue, has now been recognized as an absurdity even by the same media that were the first to call for his resignation.

The affair sheds some light on the ongoing restructuring of the German Jewish communities, which is proceeding as a "joint venture" between Moscow and the faction in world Jewry headed by Edgar Bronfman.

There are some 30,000 practicing Jews living in the western part of divided Germany, and some 400 in the eastern part. The figures tell something about the reality of Jewish life in Soviet-run East Germany. For comparison, some 60,000 practicing Jews are registered in Hungary.

There are, however, more Jews in East Germany than the 400 who are officially registered, because many German Jews, having worked with the Soviet-controlled "anti-fascist" committees of the pre-1945 period, dropped their religious ties and joined the communist party.

One of these "deserters" is Hermann Axen, member of the ruling Socialist Unity Party's Central Committee in East Germany. He is not only in charge of international relations, but also of international Jewish relations, specifically to the pre-1945 left-wing exile community of European Jews in the United States, Great Britain and France. California, New York, London and Paris were the big centers of exile Jewish communities, under significant political control of the "anti-authoritarian group" of the Frankfurt

School, and of the networks of Bertold Brecht and the Thomas Mann family.

Axen, who has been in the inner circle of the regime in East Germany from 1945 on, was important enough for the Soviets to let him survive the anti-Jewish purges and pogroms in East Germany in the 1950s. During this period, more than 3,000 of the 5,000 Jews then living in East Germany chose to emigrate to the West, to escape persecution for what the regime called "treasonous collaboration with Western imperialist and Zionist circles."

On an official level, East German policy toward the state of Israel and international Jewish organizations has remained one of enmity, ever since the late 1940s. That has much to do with why a faction in the Israeli foreign service protested Bronfman's East bloc diplomacy as "private, and not serving the interest of Israel." It came as a big surprise, therefore, that Axen was the honored guest in May of the U.S. State Department. During his tour he met with representatives of the World Jewish Congress, and extended an official invitation to WJC head Bronfman.

There is no reason for surprise, however, since Axen's networks had kept in close contact with left-wing Jewish networks in the United States throughout the postwar period. This has implications for the domestic U.S. situation, too. To understand why most of the U.S. Jewish vote on Nov. 8 was cast for Michael Dukakis and not for George Bush, it is important to look at the influence of Soviet-run (via East

Germany) Jewish networks.

When WJC's Bronfman, the Canadian-born liquor magnate, met with East Germany's leader Erich Honecker and Axen in October, rumors in Germany had it that deals concerning the political activities and voting patterns of Jews in the United States were on the agenda. In return, Bronfman signaled extended business relations with the East Germans, and assistance in getting Honecker invited for his first official visit to the United States, in 1989 or 1990.

Another "favor" East Germany promised Bronfman was to have the prewar Jewish group, *Adass Yisroel*, reestablished at its former headquarters in eastern Berlin. Bronfman's favor in return is, some say, a yet-undefined "opening" on the U.S. side, and assistance in East Germany's plans to extend its control over Jewish affairs in West Germany.

A successor organization to *Adass Yisroel* was established in West Berlin several years ago under the same name, but it was never officially recognized by the western-based Central Council of the Jews in Germany. It is said that the recognition was blocked because of the group's links to the East Germans. Until his unexpected death in January 1988, Werner Nachmann was the chairman of the Central Council.

Intelligence sources in Germany have pointed out that Heinz Galinski, the "Bronfmanite" current chairman of the Central Council, is an old friend of Michael Wolf, long the head of East Germany's foreign intelligence. It comes as no big surprise, these sources say, that Galinski received the highest state medal of the East Germans, the Golden Star of People's Friendship, from the hands of Honecker at a ceremony in East Berlin on Nov. 12, the day after the forced resignation of Jenninger.