

German-Russian deal signed, in hope of averting chaos

by Nora Hamerman

The far-reaching economic accord signed between Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachov and Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany just one year since the opening of the Berlin Wall, provides the only hope on the horizon that the Soviet Union won't collapse into chaos.

The 20-year cooperation treaty the two leaders signed during Gorbachov's Nov. 9-11 visit to Bonn provides for \$10 billion in credits for the Russians, and includes specific arrangements for decommissioning Russian troops now stationed in the former East Germany, and providing for their housing back in the Soviet Union.

In their public exchange of greetings on Nov. 9, Kohl and Gorbachov emphasized the importance of food supplies. Kohl wished the Soviet Union success with this year's harvest; Gorbachov said he hopes the Germans have a good harvest as well.

This was more than a diplomatic nicety: On Nov. 15, Kohl declared that Germany will deliver more food to the Soviet Union in case of emergency this coming winter, in an address to the German Parliament. He also stated the government's firm commitment for new diplomatic efforts to have other Western countries join concerted aid programs for the East European and Soviet economies.

The food commitment is one of the many that have been worked out over the past few months of negotiations. On Sept. 10, after negotiations with a Soviet government delegation in East Berlin, then-West German Minister of Agriculture, Ignaz Kiechle, announced the delivery of DM2.5 billion of surplus food products to the Soviet Union over the next weeks and months, extending into the spring of 1991. These will mainly be surpluses from East Germany, where citizens are more and more supplied with higher-quality food products from the West now. The promised emergency food deliveries included 120,000 tons of beef and 20,000 tons of

lamb, 100,000 tons of pork, 10,000 tons of poultry, 60,000 tons of butter, 3,000 tons of full-fat milk powder, 5,000 tons of fish, 60,000 tons of flour, and 100 million eggs.

Has Kohl read LaRouche's proposal?

On Oct. 12, 1988, before anyone imagined that German reunification and the fall of the Wall were at hand, American presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche journeyed to Berlin and proposed, in a historic speech at the Kempinski Bristol Hotel, that Western help in solving the increasingly critical food situation in the Soviet Union and East bloc would provide the basis for liberating East Germany in the near future. LaRouche, who had just catalyzed the founding of the worldwide "Food for Peace" organization the previous summer, starting with an intervention at the July 1988 U.S. Democratic Party's National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia laid out a "food for peace" perspective centered on the economic rescue of Poland. He said that Western food aid and technical aid for development should be exchanged for the freeing of those captive nations.

The key to the elaborated LaRouche plan, called the Productive Triangle, is the rapid upgrading of European-wide infrastructure—especially railroads and nuclear energy sources. This was considerably discussed during Gorbachov's trip to Germany.

Talks between Kohl and Gorbachov, Bonn Economics Minister Helmut Haussmann and Soviet Deputy Premier Sitaryan, as well as various meetings between representatives of the Eastern Trade Department of Federation of German Industry Associations and Soviet experts, focused for two days on the vital role of infrastructure. Interviewed on German television about the talks, Edzard Reuter, chairman of the Daimler-Benz Corp., said: "Infrastructure is the key question in our relations to the Soviet Union."

Another leading German industry spokesman said that the "process of defining priority infrastructure projects in the transport, energy, or food sectors must be accelerated."

Indeed, German delivery of food shipments to the Soviet Union is already being held up by serious infrastructural bottlenecks. This includes the line-up of thousands of railroad cars at the central transport cross-point at the Polish-Soviet border at Brest. This has forced the Polish authorities to call off all scheduled rail transports designated to Brest, for the time being. Similar reports are coming in from the Soviet border to Czechoslovakia.

On Nov. 9, a spokesman for the German State Railways told *EIR* that besides the chronic problem at Brest—the changing of gauges and the lack of efficient administration or will on the Soviet side—there have been severe problems with Soviet coordination of food emergency transports from eastern Germany and of regular rail transports coming in. The Soviets simply blocked, unannounced, all cargo except food deliveries. Draft proposals to solve this chronic Brest problem, which has come to a peak with the increased food transports from eastern Germany, have been presented to the transport ministries in Bonn and Moscow, as well as to the German-Soviet economic commission. The response has been, however, almost zero.

Some reports also hit the press about future German investments, which would be directed specifically to long-term projects in the energy, food, and transport sectors of the Soviet Union. In the energy sector, Germany is proposing priority investments in clearly defined projects for increased production of crude oil and natural gas, which could be supplied to Western Europe.

Strategic impact

Chancellor Kohl is proceeding with his diplomacy vis-à-vis the East with one overriding objective in mind: creating strategic stability by preventing the eruption of chaos in the East. It is truly a race against time, and the criminally destructive activities of the International Monetary Fund, which is now wreaking havoc in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland.

Kohl made his concerns explicit during his meetings with Polish Minister President Tadeusz Mazowiecki on Nov. 8, a few days before Germany and Poland on Nov. 14 signed the treaty making permanent the current border between the two countries, running along the rivers Oder and Neisse. The Chancellor said that Western assistance in the consolidation of the Eastern European economies was as important as stabilizing production in eastern Germany itself. Germany cannot be stable and safe if its closest neighbors are undergoing convulsions, Kohl said.

The same principle clearly holds true for the Soviet Union itself, which is currently facing dramatic breakdowns in supplies of foodstuffs and fuel, augmented by nationalist upsurges. It is not sure that President Gorbachov is going

to be able to make it through the winter under current conditions.

On Nov. 15, on the eve of an emergency "state of the nation" address by President Mikhail Gorbachov, numbers of deputies in the Supreme Soviet issued dire warnings about the economic and social crisis in the U.S.S.R. A deputy from the Moscow region, Valentina Gudilina, told her parliamentary colleagues, "I've been to my constituency and there will be a famine there soon, comrades, a real famine." A deputy from the Urals exclaimed that with rations of one-half kilo of meat and flour per month already in effect, "my region is already at famine conditions. What do you want to discuss more? Our people will not tolerate us, or others, for long." And Lt. Col. Viktor Aksnis, from Latvia, said, "If we fail to take some sort of measures, people will go into the streets to defend their children. People will take up arms." In this context, Aksnis scoffed at rumors of a military coup, saying that if the soldiers moved onto the streets under present circumstances, it would be to defend their own families.

The day before, 22 Soviet influentials wrote an open letter to Gorbachov in the *Moscow News*, urging him to take "firm and urgent measures" to "avert civil war." They asked him to use his extra powers of decree to prevent an economic and political collapse, noting that those powers could either be used as "an instrument for a dictatorship or to defend democratic perestroika," and that a dictatorship would be a disaster.

Upheaval in the Soviet Union would represent a danger internationally as well as internally. It is likely that this fact was in the signers' minds when Kohl and Gorbachov signed the overall treaty, which included a special consultation clause. The clause calls for consultations at least once a year, and includes the following language: "In case a situation emerges that in the view of either side poses a threat to peace or a violation of peace or can provoke dangerous international tensions, both sides will be committed to contact each other without delay, to coordinate their positions and reach agreement on steps that are appropriate for an improvement of the situation or [crisis] solution."

Even in Britain, there are some circles which are recognizing the danger. Now is the absolute worst time to be thinking of a major confrontation in the Gulf, advised the London *Guardian* on Nov. 15. The paper reported the latest dire warnings about the Soviet internal situation made by Mikhail Gorbachov himself and by Marshal Akhromeyev, and noted reports from Washington of "a wide-ranging intelligence review to begin to examine the consequences for the U.S. of a breakup of the Soviet Union." It has even gotten to the point, that Pentagon officials speak of the wisdom of learning the telephone numbers of "Soviet missile commanders in Siberia." The *Guardian* warned in conclusion that the West "could make things much worse by heightening tension elsewhere. It is not only in the Middle East where our expectations could go off the map."