

## Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

### Moscow bets gainst Kohl

*A Soviet-authored gambling casino scandal is taking the Christian Democratic Union party apart.*

A double game on Germany is on at the Kremlin. While Mikhail Gorbachov was shaking hands in Moscow, Oct. 24, with his guest from Bonn, Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Soviet-controlled networks in West Germany were launching a destabilization drive which many here believe is the prelude to Kohl's overthrow.

Gorbachovite media in Germany like the scandal weeklies, *Der Spiegel* and *Stern* magazine, and the pro-Soviet opposition Social Democrats (SPD), have begun a campaign of revelations about "sleaze and bribery nests" in the CDU party sections of the two states, Lower Saxony and Rhineland-Palatinate. Both states are governed by a thin majority coalition of the CDU with the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP).

The scandals involve suspected bribery of leading CDU politicians in both states. The unproven charges are that gambling casino figures made hefty money contributions to the CDU several years ago, to get the concessions to operate the casinos.

The charges are, moreover, that both CDU state party sections sought a share in the gambling revenue to illegally bolster their own party funds.

In Hanover, for example, gambling casino director Marian Felsenstein, a "Jewish mafia" figure, has been a key source of ever-new "revelations" about contacts between the gambling world and the CDU party top. The Jewish gambling mafia angle is important because of the links to Edgar Bronfman's special business operations. This includes his recent

shuttle diplomacy, as head of the World Jewish Congress, with Warsaw Pact leaders like Mikhail Gorbachov and Erich Honecker. Many believe that Bronfman is sacrificing previous Western Jewish interests, for newly brokered deals which are to the Kremlin's strategic advantage.

The gambling world overlaps indirectly with the mob scene, through "sleaze networks" among political parties of Germany. It happens to be the case, however, that much of the more positive secret intelligence work between East and West runs through the very same "grey zone" channels that are, at least partially, under control of the Jewish mob.

The CDU aspect of this has been chosen by Edgar Bronfman's networks, apparently, for political troublemaking. At the outset of 1988, the chairman of the West German Jewish Council, Werner Nachmann, a member of the CDU and Kohl supporter, and also a foe of Edgar Bronfman's libelous anti-Waldheim campaign, died unexpectedly. Two months after his death, irregularities in special funds he had managed within the Jewish Council's finances were found, not least through "hot tips" given from the East Germans and from Frankfurt-based Jewish gambling and real estate speculation figure, Ignaz Bubis.

It is said that these "grey zone funds" had been used by Nachmann, with knowledge of the Bonn government (i.e., Chancellor Kohl), for special operations to support Jewish opposition networks inside the East bloc. The ruling parties in the East bloc had

an interest in having these operations shut down, and it seems, so does Edgar Bronfman.

The "Nachmann affair" has caused purges of Jewish community leaders in Germany who had been close to Nachmann. From here, the affair has been played back against Bonn.

There are hints that during or after the Moscow visit of Kohl and his delegation, the Soviet leaders decided to drop the CDU option, and endorse a takeover of government in Bonn by the Moscow-leaning opposition SPD. "Sleaze networks" inside Kohl's CDU party provide a welcome leverage for the intended upheaval. In the State Chamber (Bundesrat), West Germany's second legislative body, which is crucial because it can veto and block any legislation, Kohl's CDU has only a one-state majority.

One minister and an ex-minister of the CDU's Rhineland-Palatinate state cabinet are being investigated now, on charges of bribery and "grey zone" relations to the gambling scene. The state government could fall over this affair.

In the state of Lower Saxony, the unfolding gambling casino scandal has already led to the resignation of two cabinet ministers and reshuffle in a government that rules by a one-vote parliamentary majority only.

The fall of Lower Saxony Gov. Ernst Albrecht over the affair, and ensuing early elections won by the opposition Social Democrats, seem likely. Once this state comes under SPD control, Kohl won't be able to govern. The resulting "dual power" constellation would be at Moscow's full disposal. There could be a direct overthrow of Kohl, or ultimate Soviet blackmail, through the SPD, of his government, turned into a puppet regime living on the good will of Gorbachov: Do as I like, or else!