

Report from Bonn by Rainer Apel

Chemical warfare against Germany

Chemical weapons in Libya are not the issue. It's the German chemical industry that's under fire.

Are German chemical companies really building what one newspaper called "an Auschwitz in the sands" of Libya? So far, no proof has been offered for the charges of West German involvement in what the media call the "Third World's largest complex for production of chemical weapons" at Rabta. But there is plenty of proof, going back years, of the political involvement with Libya of German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. And the U.S. State Department has no quarrel with Genscher on this score.

The real target of the media campaign is Germany's chemical industry, which plays a leading role in supplying the Third World with pharmaceuticals, pesticides, fertilizers, and insecticides. German deliveries of insecticides and related technologies have come under attack, with allegations that "it is easy to turn pesticides into lethal chemical weapons." The aim of the campaign is tight export controls on German chemical technology.

For the past six years, Genscher has resisted any international action against Libya's Muammar Qaddafi. The call for a boycott came up in 1982 in response to Qaddafi's terrorism against the Americans. Among Europe's foreign ministers, Genscher was loudest in disavowing any action against Libya, then. His argument was that Libya's role in international terrorism was "grossly overrated."

Libyan hit squads killed exiled opposition figures in Bonn, and some of the arrested terrorists were put on trial in a German court. Genscher intervened in the case, arguing for a silent

expulsion of the terrorists, ostensibly in order to protect the lives of Germans working in Libya from "potential retaliation."

Germans working in Libya? Yes. West German businesses were encouraged by Genscher to invest in Libya, which became one of Germany's major suppliers of crude oil. The political preconditions for an increased German investment in Libya were set, and expanded, by Genscher personally. He is to blame.

But Genscher has come under no real attack by the U.S. government. Genscher has even joined U.S. calls for prohibitive laws on German "sensitive chemical exports." In spite of media stories about "clashes between Bonn and Washington," Genscher and the State Department are on good terms on the chemical question.

They are in full agreement that non-proliferation of advanced chemical technology is to be put on the international diplomatic agenda. This is also in line with the policy of the Soviets, who have warned that there can't be nuclear disarmament as long as there is a "gray zone" in the chemical realm, which allows "chemical weapons to be the poor man's nuclear bomb." The same argument has surfaced in Washington, Paris, and Bonn, in the current debate on Libya and chemical weapons.

It is a well-known fact that both the United States and the Soviet Union are developing a new generation of chemical weapons, the so-called "binary potentials." Unlike the lethal substances Lost, Tabun, and mustard gas, the binary weapons consist of two chemicals, neither of which is lethal

unless the two are brought together. It is much easier to store and transport these new weapons, and both superpowers find it sensible to get rid of the older chemical weapons. Exclusive control over binary weapons technologies is only possible, naturally, if others are prevented from getting them.

This debate is proceeding almost the same way as did the international debate on nuclear non-proliferation during the 1960s, when the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. began modernizing their nuclear arsenals. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that was signed in 1968 did not reduce the arsenals of the nuclear powers, but limited Third World access to nuclear technology in general, and curbed West German nuclear technology exports to the developing countries.

Memories are still fresh in West Germany of the years 1976-77, when President Jimmy Carter charged the German nuclear industry with supplying Brazil with sensitive technologies that would serve a nuclear bomb project there. When the Germans protested against these allegations, Carter imposed an embargo on U.S. deliveries of nuclear fuels and technology to West Germany.

This embargo was accompanied by the growth of the radical-ecologist movement of the Greens in West German politics. As the role of Carter's zero-growth *Global 2000* report and the Soviet KGB's control of the Greens show, the rise of the Greens was a joint East-West project, used to influence policymaking in Bonn. The same Greens are fully activated on the "c-weapon" issue now.

One of the main results of Carter's blackmail was that within a few years, Germany's nuclear industry had pulled out from much of the Third World, and even from European countries like Spain and Turkey.