

Eyewitness Reports

The Collapse of the DDR

MARCH 10—One of the most striking things about events in the DDR [German Democratic Republic] is the almost total absence of *political* class-conscious activity by workers as workers. To understand why, you have to understand something of the social/political reality in the DDR. It seems clear that the elementary consciousness of the workers of themselves as a class, with their own class interests, exists on a much lower level in the DDR than in the Federal Republic [BRD].

Many DDR workers have no idea how capitalism works, or that workers and capitalists have opposing interests. A recent poll showed 56 percent of the people in the DDR believed that only *minimal* legal limitations should be placed on capitalists. In the BRD only 39 percent felt that minimal legal controls are adequate. The organized opposition, the mass demonstrations, the post-November “citizens’ movements” and the developing political parties had no independent working-class character. The leadership of all parties, from left to right, was and is in the hands of the petty bourgeoisie: doctors, academics, ministers, artists and lawyers. Even the United Left [Vereinigte Linke (VL)] activists are students and academics. The strike wave that occurred in late January and early February has tapered off. Issues were limited and varied: higher wages, demands for management (SED) resignations and for separating factories from Kombinat and economic control (narrow worker sectoral interest).

Capitalist Restorationism and Trade Unionism in the DDR

Some *Betriebsrat* [workers council] bodies have been formed but these are either like shop-steward groups or nascent trade-union formations. The maximum level of working-class organization to date has been a ragged and confused growth of trade-union activity. The FDGB (Stalinist-dominated union body) quickly got rid of its old leadership (many resigned without pressure), and is trying to rebuild a trade-union movement on a limited, defensive trade-union program.

Distrust of the old FDGB (which had done nothing for 40 years) gave rise to burgeoning independent trade unions with narrow interests. Teachers, police and railroad workers began asking for *Beamtenstatus* (as in the BRD). This has been a special category of public workers who give up the right to strike in exchange for fixed wages and lifetime jobs. When the independent teachers union asked for state guaranteed social protection, i.e., medical care, child care and cost of living (only for themselves), they were told rudely by the vice-minister of education that workers can have such guarantees only with socialism, and one can have socialism only with dictatorship. The ideology of the union movement is borrowed directly from the DGB [BRD trade-union movement] and the SPD [BRD Social Democratic Party],

which are directly guiding and trying to control the DDR union movement.

The DGB is apparently having some success in persuading the FDGB that shop-steward bodies must be separated from the union with full-time, on-site workers representatives, paid by the enterprise, not the union. This is rationalized as giving full scope to workers democracy, but is really aimed at separating the trade-union functionaries from the rank and file, and limiting work-place meetings (whether meetings of the whole workforce or of shop-steward bodies) to economic matters. It is a framework for establishing a very bureau-cratized trade-union structure, free from control by the base, which could get away with holding very infrequent membership meetings.

The DDR parliament amended the basic law to forbid lockouts and guarantee the unlimited right to strike. The law enshrines *Mitbestimmung*, which does not simply mean that workers and employers must sit down and talk, but also that both parties have common interests in efficient and uninterrupted production, and *must* act together for social peace. This is the legislative and ideological underpinning of the BRD trade-union movement. The proposed DDR trade-union law included language on “co-determination” that implied union veto power over management prerogatives such as joint ventures, outright sale of factories, placing economic enterprises on the stock market, etc. This was rejected by the parliament. “Co-determination,” by the way, is the maximum economic trade-union program of the West German SPD and DGB. The legislation, which was made part of the DDR constitution by a two-thirds Volkskammer [DDR parliament] vote, was passed despite the objections of some CDU (DDR) members of parliament.

The DDR trade-union law has some parallels with the Norris-La Guardia Act (the so-called Magna Carta of labor), passed in the U.S. in the 1930s. The CP [Communist Party] as well as the SWP [Socialist Workers Party] opposed the law as an extension of the “right” of the capitalist state to intervene in and exert control over workers struggles. The CP quickly capitulated, but the Trotskyist SWP did not. Of course the situation here is different because it is still a deformed workers state.

The fact that the new law does not place limitations on the right to strike resulted in a storm of anger from BRD capitalists, and threats of no economic “aid” unless the law is changed to conform *at least* to BRD restrictions (which are in some ways more restrictive than U.S. law). The SPD (DDR) candidate for prime minister, Boehm, stated darkly that this law will be “subject to disposition.” There is great anger at what is seen as a PDS attempt to cater to working-class interests and disrupt rapid capitalist restoration.

But the restorationist drive seems very strong. If, after the elections, a pro-capitalist government is consoli-

dated and state property is privatized, new amendments to the trade-union law will rapidly be imposed to narrow the space for “legal” workers defensive actions. The *Mitbestimmung* establishes the framework for class collaborationism involving the unions. A sort of precedent for this already exists in the BRD. Elected workers representatives in the BRD often have legal access to employer financial and business records and information, but are prohibited from telling their fellow workers or union officials. Violation of this can lead to severe penalties.

The Legacy of Prussian Stalinism

Why did this happen? Forty years of Stalinism have resulted in a profound depoliticization of the working class in the DDR. Workers had neither independent organization nor even the most limited union rights. All benefits came from above, from the party. The SED/DDR catchword was not “working class” but “Volk.” This can be translated as “people,” but also carries extreme nationalistic connotations of race, culture and blood. Everything was Volks: Volks-parliament, Volks-army, Volks-police. In fact the old Prussian elitism was carried over into all institutions. Academics and professionals appear to have had more influence than workers in the state and economic apparatus; university graduates automatically became army officers. Workers could aspire only to be soldiers. Academics with doctorates occupied almost all leading positions, except for a handful of politburo members.

This was a state with non-capitalist Prussian-style organization and petty-bourgeois intolerance and smugness. The petty bourgeoisie is quite sizable. Eighty thousand private petty-bourgeois establishments (limited to ten workers) are in operation, ranging from pubs and restaurants, to repair and service, to small factories. There are close to a million people in the DDR working for private businesses outside the *Volkseigentum* [peoples’ property] sector of the economy. These petty entrepreneurs, together with clergy and academics, constituted the cadre of the movements and parties fighting for reunification and capitalist restoration. They were joined rapidly by most of the economic administrators and bureaucrats.

Political ideology did not exist in the DDR except as a crude form of Prussian Stalinism. Few people (including SED members) completely embraced or really believed in this world view. People just went home and watched BRD TV (except in and around Dresden). Enormous social pressure had built up, and when the mass demonstrations began, a number of writers and intellectuals attempted to give expression to a “democratic socialist” vision for the future of the DDR. This vision was very soon swept away and replaced with a vision of market economics and capitalist reunification as the way forward.

The regime virtually collapsed. The political bureau of the SED resigned, and the SED conference removed the entire central committee without replacing them. Many SED functionaries quit the party and left their government posts. An economic and political vacuum

existed. The most important ministry, the economic ministry, ceased to function. Central (or even ministerial) planning collapsed or was abandoned. Kombinat and works management were left without power or guidance; regional government bodies collapsed either through resignation or lack of “legitimacy.”

In the political field many SED state functionaries were initially replaced with ministers from the four bloc parties, and ministers without portfolio were added from the Round Table opposition. These were mostly from the “center” parties. The PDS is in a minority in the council of ministers. A significant number of government functionaries left the SED, and either joined the right-wing or the liberal parties or are knocking on the door of the SPD.

Most of the industrial and economic managers began demanding legalization of capitalist property. A few Kombinat managers are making half-hearted pleas for *Volkseigentum* in heavy industry, but of course subject to market pressures. Everywhere Round Table formations have sprung up and are assuming administrative powers. These often include the PDS, which appears to always capitulate to the majority. These Round Table formations have appointed working bodies to study, make recommendations, and to assume control of administrative functions, buildings, communications, press and former Stasi [disbanded DDR secret police] property.

The initial cry “we are the people” was rapidly replaced with the slogan “we are one people.” The orgy of nationalism is more widespread and hysterical than in the BRD. The ideological programmatic vacuum is filled almost entirely from the BRD. Capitalism, national reunification and anti-communist slogans, as expressed by BRD political parties, have been adopted wholesale, and are reflected in simplistic slogan form by almost all the larger, influential DDR parties. German nationalism dominates. Our German brothers and sisters will not allow us to suffer, but will rapidly incorporate us into successful BRD capitalism, with its extensive social cushions. After all, we are all Germans! Television shows of factory and work-place meetings in the DDR show workers begging for advice as how to build capitalism, or workers passionately attacking former SED members and saying, “We can only move forward when we get rid of everything red.”

It seems that, at the moment, conditions in the DDR are more favorable for the rapid growth of neo-fascist groups and ideology than in the BRD. The DDR regime was always extremely nationalistic. Fascism was always characterized primarily as anti-communist. At the site of the Buchenwald concentration camp there are no memorials or information about the large number of Jews who were imprisoned and murdered there. Schoolchildren learned very little about the Holocaust. The Ulbricht regime was openly anti-Semitic. A sizable number of Jewish communists returned to the DDR after 1945. Many were persecuted, and most Jews left the DDR in subsequent years. The DDR is supposed to have only 400 people of Jewish background (Gysi’s father was a German Communist Jew). About 0.8 percent of the DDR population is composed of non-German residents,

mostly students or workers from Vietnam, Poland, Mozambique, Angola and Cuba. Non-German children born in the DDR have no rights to citizenship and apparently it is impossible for non-Germans to acquire citizenship. Foreign workers are limited to a maximum of five years residence. There are no exceptions. The PDS election platform makes no mention of allowing foreign workers to remain after five years, and Christa Luft, vice-premier, PDS member, and minister (without a ministry) of economics, is alleged to have sent laid-off Vietnamese workers back to Vietnam.

Foreign workers and students, especially in Leipzig and Dresden, are living in fear. They stay home during demonstrations, and the increasingly bold fascist elements are demanding the expulsion of all non-Germans. When a small group of students (German and foreign) put up a small exhibit against racism and *Ausländer-feindlichkeit* (hostility toward foreigners) during one of the regular Monday demonstrations in Leipzig, people denied the existence of racism but said that the foreigners should be sent home or strictly segregated.

Übersiedler (people who leave the DDR for the BRD) are demanding that the millions of Turks in the BRD be sent home to make jobs and living space for “real” Germans. Every morning thousands of people pour into West Berlin, demanding jobs held by Turks, and offering to work for less than legal or union contract wages. Mothers with black or Asian mates in the DDR fear for their children’s safety.

The Round Table recommended that the Republikan Party (neo-fascists) be forbidden in the DDR. The Volkshammer adopted the proposed law but no one enforces it. Skinheads and neo-Nazis openly demonstrate, shouting “Reds Out!” and “Foreigners Out!” and singing the verse from the old German national anthem that speaks of Germany from the Memel (a river in the USSR) to the Maas (a river running through France, Belgium and the Netherlands) to the Etsch (a river in northern Italy). BRD television has had plenty of coverage of the Republikan Party in the DDR, including meetings to establish new branches.

When a small group of anti-fascists (associated with the Autonomous movement) tried to confront a group of skinheads, the *Volkspolizei* (peoples police) protected the fascists. West German journalists went to the office of the district attorney in Leipzig. They showed him videos of the Republikan Party meeting establishing the party in Leipzig and shots of neo-fascist demonstrations there. He responded by flatly denying that any such activity was taking place. He also noted that the video footage was not taken from DDR television!

The DDR election commission refused to register the Republikan Party for the March elections. This move was probably made because a high neo-fascist vote would have alarmed many in the BRD (especially in the SPD base) and increased resistance to reunification in the other European countries. BRD capitalists don’t need the fascists yet. In fact the increased fascist vote is cutting into the CDU/CSU [Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union] vote and endangering the governing state, city and county administrations—especially in their strongholds in the states in the southeast of the

BRD. The necessity for the CSU and CDU to form governing coalitions with neo-fascists could jeopardize CDU/FDP [Free Democratic Party] coalition governments. After an *Anschluss*, of course, the Republikan Party will be legalized—the idea of a German confederation with a separate legal system and constitution in the DDR raises too many problems for rapid capitalist restoration. The right-wing and liberal parties are for rapid and total reunification under the BRD constitution and laws. The DDR Republikan Party is composed mostly of workers with some petty bourgeois. It includes many former SED members. Besides the PDS, the neo-fascists have the most plebeian membership and profile.

I have seen *no* mention or coverage of neo-Nazi demonstrations or activities on DDR TV. DDR television coverage of Leipzig demos carefully avoids mentioning the neo-fascists, which is not surprising, since the radio and TV are largely in the hands of the right-wing and SPD Round Table forces. Those DDR parties that are allied to BRD parties are well financed and have taken over news-papers or started up new ones. The huge West German publishers have formed a consortium for massive penetration of magazines and newspapers into the DDR, including the worst right-wing street tabloids (naked women, axe-murders by foreigners and communist/terrorist plots). The better quality press, like the *Frankfurter Rundschau*, the high-quality muckraking weekly, *Der Spiegel*, and the leftist daily *Tageszeitung* (TAZ) are of course excluded from this consortium.

All the former bloc parties and almost all the newly formed parties have moved rapidly to the right in the space of two months. For example, the CDU (DDR) bloc party, which used to stand for “socialism,” is now in an election alliance that opposes all forms of economic enterprise that are collective or public in nature. The “Democratic Awakening” opposition movement started out for “democratic socialism,” then tried for a bloc with the SPD and, when that failed, ended up in the same bloc with the CDU and the even more right-wing DSU.

The economic, political, ideological and programmatic vacuum is being filled almost entirely from the BRD. Discussions in the media reflect an unsophisticated, watered-down version of BRD politics and social/economic thought. This is most apparent in the arena of economics. It seems that every DDR academic with a degree in economics is working full time explaining how laissez-faire capitalism has matured into responsible capitalism; how only the stock market is truly democratic; how market forces automatically result in flexibility and an efficient, productive economy; and how the very idea of a planned economy is unscientific. According to the economic academics, two-thirds of all businesses in the BRD and the U.S. are small or medium concerns (“dismantle the Kombinati!”); most successful U.S. businesses were started by one or two men in a garage, and rapidly grew larger (“you too can get rich!”), etc. They are equally adept at explaining how socially-owned property can only mean “party-owned” property, and can only operate through top-down commandism. By contrast, they claim private enterprises cannot be commandist because they must operate in accordance with the desires of consumers.

This is all embarrassingly naive, and the people in the BRD are much more cynical about how “democratic” the market actually is. A much larger proportion of BRD workers believe that only strong workers parties and unions can force the capitalists to part with a large enough share of the total social product to maintain their current standard of living.

Things aren't all that rosy for the capitalists, and the steady stream of DDR people coming to the BRD (10,000 to 15,000 weekly) is a source of considerable social tension. The cost of maintaining them is astronomical. The BRD constitution regards all such people as full German (i.e., BRD) citizens who are automatically eligible for social insurance, schooling, unemployment assistance and retirement benefits. In addition, the law obligates the BRD (or individual states) to furnish housing, living expenses and help in finding jobs. The BRD already has a severe shortage of housing and almost two million unemployed. Most *Übersiedler* are currently housed in sports halls, cruise ships, cargo containers, trailers or military barracks. Alcoholism and drug addiction are a serious problem. There are a lot of reports of fights between DDRers and Poles of German descent. On top of that, even many of the well-trained and educated DDRers have proven unemployable. They are not used to either the pace or the capitalist work discipline. Unless they receive a direct order, they tend to play cards or stand around.

They expect only to be required to perform one simple task, and are in the habit of arriving late and taking off early. The rude, selfish, male-chauvinist behavior of many of them has apparently been causing problems with co-workers, as has their extreme intolerance for dress, behavior or lifestyles which even slightly deviate from DDR norms. Parents are not accustomed to the absence of accessible, very cheap and comprehensive child care. There have been reports of some of them simply walking off and leaving unattended children. Already there is evidence of demoralization among many of those who expected that a new car, a nice, cheap modern flat and an easy job were all part of the “free world” package.

The cost of capitalist restoration will be quite high. Before the economy can be profitably reoriented, simply treating the DDR as an exploitable colony could mean that the bulk of the 16 million population would flood into the BRD. They have the *constitutional right!* The employers are telling BRD workers that a shorter work week or significant pay raise is out of the question. The capitalists tell the workers that they will have to sacrifice to help their sisters and brothers in the East, i.e., taxes will have to be raised and social services reduced. The DGB and SPD may be developing sharp differences with the BRD government on the question of who will pay for reunification. The two million-member metal union is gearing up with a demand for a 35-hour week plus an 8.5 percent pay raise. The printing and media union has similar demands. There could be a major strike wave in the BRD by late spring. The initial enthusiasm for reunification is clearly receding from the earlier high point when all parties in the Bundestag (except part of the Greens) supported reunification.

In the DDR the planned economy has been effectively abandoned. DDR managers, confronted by workers anxiety about jobs and wages, plead helplessness, and argue that only rapid privatization can supply a *Tarifpartner* (a bargaining partner). The PDS program is limited to an occasional plea for retaining some mining and heavy industry as public property. The regime is retreating rapidly on all fronts, especially on the question of collectivized property. But the West German capitalists are holding out for removal of all DDR laws in any way restricting capitalist activities, including reducing the (previously high) tax rates for small and middle businesses. Incidentally, all land and property confiscated from medium businesses in 1972 were recently returned.

Capitalist counterrevolution will result in massive unemployment, higher rents and the dismantling of social programs. The reality of “actually existing capitalism” will result in extreme social anxiety, which could be expressed in everything from strikes to anti-communist pogroms. Social intolerance is quite high in the DDR, and Prussian Stalinism has taught DDR people that political struggle means suppressing your opponents. As the reality of capitalism becomes clear to large sections of the population, the PDS, playing the treacherous role of left social democracy, may give leadership to this elementary class consciousness, but limit it to bourgeois trade union-ism and parliamentarism.

Enclosed is a copy of the critical support letter, which we addressed to the campaign of the Spartakist-Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands [SpAD—German organization affiliated to Jim Robertson's Spartacist League/US], which addresses their claim that a proletarian political revolution has been underway in the DDR for the past few months.

To make such assertions the TLD/SpAD simply closes its eyes to political reality. No workers councils are contending for power. No proletarian formations posing, or even aspiring to, dual power have developed in the DDR. The soldiers' councils are either limited to simply addressing soldiers' “work” conditions, or they represent pressure groups for professional military personnel, and are dominated by officers.

The SpAD must be going through a crisis of expectations. Their morale seemed low when we last saw them. The one thing they did well—distributing hundreds of thousands of leaflets and newsheets—apparently can't be continued. Their orientation toward the demoralized and depoliticized SED/PDS ranks hasn't paid off. They no longer list a Leipzig address, and, outside of Berlin, their only address is Greifswald, site of the main nuclear energy plants. Exposure of the dangerously deteriorated condition of these Chernobyl-type, first-generation technology plants has resulted in two of them being shut down. The SpAD intervened with the claim that the reported dangers were manufactured by the West. But almost no one buys this. Even the PDS agrees that bad construction, poor management and old age renders the plants unusable. SpAD arguments that only the plant workers could make the decision are not likely to get them much of a hearing.

To get a member elected to the Volkskammer, which

at this point is probably their most optimistic scenario, the SpAD will have to get 0.25 percent of the vote or one vote in 400 straight proportional representation....

MARCH 21—The SpAD got fewer votes than we expected, less than the German Beer Drinkers' Union, which ran only in Rostock. The total, 2,396 votes, is very low. Of course the tide was running heavily in favor of reunification, but I think their inability to adjust their election propaganda to the changing realities also hurt them. When it became clear that the vote was going to be overwhelmingly for capitalist restoration and unification, they should, without compromising on this key question, have also tried to address the more immediate questions of working-class defense and especially basic class-struggle trade-union questions. The Vereinigte Linke, with a few hundred members, addressed trade-union questions within the context of defending the working class, and ended up winning one seat in parliament, with 0.18 percent of the vote. VL supporters also actively intervened in the trade-union movement and shop-steward bodies.

We saw one DDR TV discussion with a participant from the SpAD. It was an embarrassing disaster. The Spart was a caricature of a new leftist in appearance and style, and a caricature of a Trotskyist politically. He simply read a series of slogans, and appeared unable to respond in any real way to questions about economic restructuring, rents, child care, unemployment, subventions or currency reform.

These were all good openings, which could have been linked to working-class power and collectivized property forms. On parliamentarism, he said, "We will smash this parliament with workers councils and workers militias," while totally ignoring the question of trade-union rights, and the possible course of workers struggles in the near future. He was worse than the lowest-level SYL [Spartacus Youth League, defunct American Spartacist youth organization] recruit of the 1970s. SpAD style is lecturing and arrogant, just like the old SED style. The SpAD election leaflet emphasized defence of the USSR, but nowhere described the USSR as a degenerated workers state! Other parties in the tele-vision discussion simply ignored the SpAD speaker.

Election results show that the "capitalism now / unification now / no interference from the trade unions" program of the conservative Allianz für Deutschland [Alliance for Germany] got its main support from the heavily industrialized south and the smaller towns and villages. In areas where over 45 percent of the people work in industry, the Alliance got 56 percent of the vote; where service and agriculture dominate the economy, the Alliance got 30 to 42 percent. Fifty-eight percent of those describing themselves as "workers" voted for the Alliance. Only 32 percent of those described as "intelligentsia" voted for the Alliance; an equivalent percentage of this group voted for the PDS and Bündnis 90. This latter group includes the three citizens' movements, which largely led the November revolution. In cities with 200,000 or more, the Alliance got only 26.5 percent of the vote, contrasted with towns of 2,000 or less, where the right wing got over 56 percent. The smallest Alliance

vote was, of course, Berlin (22 percent), where they ran third behind the SPD and PDS. The Alliance also did not get a majority in the northern areas of Rostock, Schwerin, and Neubrandenburg, nor in the areas of Potsdam (central DDR) and Frankfurt on the Oder.

The SPD, which began two months ago with over 50 percent support in the DDR, played the nationalist card, and Kohl won the game! The intellectuals who led the revolution, but couldn't address economic questions with any clarity, got very little support.

DDR workers had been accustomed to receiving benefits and instructions from an authoritative, powerful state. It seems that in the elections they transferred this passive acceptance to the BRD establishment. The workers are as yet largely unaware of the difficulties ahead in trying to transform the DDR into a fully developed part of German capitalism.

In the last weeks of the election campaign, even the SPD and the other parties considered left-of-center (like Bündnis 90) and the Greens, were afraid to go into the streets in Leipzig. Anyone carrying a DDR flag in that city was likely to be attacked. Even in Berlin, gangs of skinheads attacked groups campaigning for the alternative youth list. Right-wing youths invaded youth centers and beat up people inside. Dozens of bomb threats against leftists went unreported in the BRD, except by TAZ. The most surprising result of the election was the 16.33 percent PDS vote. Two months ago the party was demoralized and at that time would have gotten at most five percent. In the election only 26 percent of former SED members voted for the PDS! Most top and many middle-level functionaries quit, but suddenly many young people joined the PDS, and it rapidly began to build a profile of defending living standards, the social net, and trade-union rights. The PDS even claims to defend the state sector of the economy—but of course within the context of market conditions.

Their whole style has changed. PDS representatives came across as pedagogic, ultra-democratic and humble. Their candidates and other public people were probably less contaminated by past collaboration with the Stasi than the Alliance candidates and functionaries. They took the lead in amending the DDR constitution to include the right to a job, the right to housing, the unlimited right to strike, and a constitutional prohibition on lockouts of workers. The PDS is now founded in Hamburg. Gregor Gysi, PDS secretary, says that the next BRD election will see the PDS in the Bundestag. This could mean a real base for left social democracy in the BRD.

The newly-elected Volkskammer cannot change the constitution or basic law without collaboration between the social democrats and the Alliance. The social democrats' commitment to rapid restructuring and capitalist restoration will probably lead them to side with the BRD capitalists, who are holding out on large investments in the DDR economy until the laws and constitution are changed to allow a total capitalist takeover. BRD capitalists are rapidly gobbling up the most advanced and productive sectors of the DDR economy, such as heavy machine building, locomotive building, electronics, optics and auto assembly, or "picking the raisins out of the cake," as it's called.

The pre-“November Revolution” DDR economy presented a contradictory picture. Although the DDR was the tenth-ranking country in the world in production of goods and services, the production per worker ranked behind every EEC country except Greece and Portugal. Farming supplied a surplus for export, but was only half as productive per person as in the EEC. Much industry operated with obsolescent equipment. The chemical industry has largely 1930s level technology, and the communication and transport infrastructure badly needed replacement and modernization. Pollution of the air, water supply, food and environment led to a decline in health, and a staggering rise in illness. Infant mortality is high for an advanced industrial country. Work-place health and safety was probably even worse than in the U.S. There were *no* mechanisms by which workers could raise demands for amelioration of work-place health hazards, since the SED claimed that all such complaints arose from petty-bourgeois life-stylist, anti-working class capitalist propaganda....

Once the border was down, the DDR effectively lost control of its currency. The erosion of the monopoly of foreign trade made DDR production vulnerable to Western market forces, just as the sharp fall in trade with the

Comecon countries and increased trade problems with the USSR was idling large sectors of the export-based economy. The sizable foreign debt and growing imbalance of foreign trade confronted the SED with the necessity to sharply reduce imports and living standards. In this context, the hopes of many in the immediate post-November period for a “democratic socialist” DDR—aspirations expressed by practically *all* parties and movements—were rapidly replaced by a sense of fatalism, hopelessness and impotence. No group presented a believable or realizable solution to the economic problems, and people soon concluded that a “third way” was not possible. Today in the DDR “socialism” is one of the dirtiest words you can use. It is associated largely with Stalinist repression and commandism. The massive BRD destabilization campaign filled the programmatic vacuum with nationalism and the magic phrase “social market economy.” The capitalists have won, and won big so far. But the Kohl regime cannot deliver on its promises to the DDR population. As the unpleasant aspects of the “social market” manifest themselves in the days ahead, it will become clear that there is more to carrying out a social counterrevolution than simply buying an election. ■