The political revolution in East Germany

League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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Origins and nature of the GDR

The division of Germany into "East" (GDR) and "West" (FRG) reflected the balance of forces between the Soviet Union and the Imperialist powers at the end of the Second World War. The Soviet plan of creating a series of neutral capitalist states as a buffer between the Soviet Union and the imperialist nations of Western Europe was quickly revealed as a utopia when the USA attempted to re-establish links with domestic capital in Eastern Europe via the Marshall Plan.

To definitively prevent this development, which would have led fairly immediately to the ousting of the Soviet-backed regimes, the bureaucratic workers' government in East Germany expropriated native capital. The SED (East Germany Communist Party) did this safe in the knowledge that they had already destroyed any semblance of genuinely independent working class organisation.

These newly established property relations can, for conciseness, be called bureaucratic planning. This sums up an economy characterised by total state ownership of industry, banking, communication and distribution, which is supervised by a centralised plan run by bureaucrats and protected from the world market by a state monopoly of foreign trade. The state created in the Soviet zone was modelled on that of the USSR, that is, it was a military police dictatorship, disguised by the trappings of bourgeois parliamentarism. This state was bourgeois in form in that it was a bureaucratic machine standing above and oppressing the workers. This state stood in contrast to the semi-state of soviets envisaged by Lenin and partly realised in the early Soviet Republic. Yet at the same time it defended not capitalist but socialised property.

Political power was concentrated in the hands of an all-powerful bureaucracy which blocked the road to international proletarian revolution and hence the only road to socialist construction. They thus prevented the conscious planned development of production by the workers themselves, the gradual eradication of inequality and the withering away of the state. The only proper designation for this state is essentially the same as that given by Leon Trotsky to Stalin's after 1936, namely, a degenerate workers' state.

Far from being a revolutionary attack on imperialism's world role, the creation of these new workers' states was, for the Soviet Union, merely a means to achieving the goal of peaceful co-existence with imperialism. The creation of the GDR as a degenerate workers' state on part of the territory of the former German state, therefore, took place against the existing consciousness of the working class and against the rhythm of the class struggle in Germany. Consequently its legitimacy has been in question ever

since. This was clearly expressed in the uprising of 1953 when workers demanded all-German elections and the ousting of the regimes that had been imposed on both parts of Germany.

Because of its origins, the GDR has always been the symbol and the barometer of relations between the world powers. Its present rapidly accelerating destabilisation is, fundamentally, a consequence of the qualitative change taking place on a world scale, both between imperialism and the Soviet Union and within the imperialist camp.

One the one hand the political and economic bankruptcy of Stalinism in the Soviet Union and its consequent weakness has obliged it to release its vice-like grip on its satellites in Eastern Europe. On the other there is the weakening of US hegemony in the imperialist camp and the continual economic strengthening of its rivals, principally the FRG within Europe.

Both of these processes have an especially powerful impact on the GDR. The FRG's development as the dynamo of the European Community (EC) involved, after the 1956 Treaty of Rome, a special dispensation for trade with the GDR. During the reconstruction period the FRG drew heavily on labour from the GDR; before the building of The Wall in 1961. Thereafter, under SPD-led governments, it adopted an *Ostpolitik* which benefited both its own economy and that of the GDR, which became a source of products from the imperialist countries for the other Comecon countries.

Although this arrangement allowed the economy of the GDR to advance and develop more quickly than those of the other degenerate workers' states of Eastern Europe, the GDR's close proximity, and obvious national-cultural affinity, to the FRG required the maintenance of an especially oppressive military-police regime. This was the basis of the SED's reputation as a hardline Stalinist party. Even before the foundation of the GDR in 1949, the SPD in the Soviet zone had been forced to fuse with the slavishly pro-Moscow KPD to form the SED. Although a large part of the membership of both the KPD and the SPD in the Ost Zone wanted the formation of a united party, the foundation of the SED did not mean the breaking away of the majority of the working class from the SPD towards the Stalinist KPD.

The Soviet administration and the KPD resorted to force to guarantee the domination of the Stalinists. These methods were diametrically opposed to those by which Communist Parties seek to achieve hegemony in the working class by leading the rank and file membership of reformist parties to break with their leaders through intervention in the struggles of the whole class and the development of revolutionary class consciousness. All other expressions of working class organisation were similarly suppressed and coerced into Stalinist-controlled social organisations.

The Berlin Wall was the most striking example both of the Stalinist mentality of the SED leaders and of the politically contradictory nature of the bureaucracy. It was built to stop the continual drain of skilled labour to the west and as a barrier to the undermining of the OstMark. Both of these aims were in themselves legitimate to defend the post capitalist property relations. However, a healthy workers' state would have achieved them on the basis of the conscious commitment of the working class to their state. The Wall was a classic bureaucratic solution to the threat posed to the very foundation of the GDR's economy by West German capitalism. The Wall was both a partial defence of post-capitalist property and an expression of

the prison-house the Stalinist dictatorship had constructed in the GDR.

The Stalinists, contemptuous as ever of the working class, believed that all this could be compensated for by relatively higher standard of living and better social services than in other degenerate workers' states.

Despite the SED's hardline reputation, these were largely financed by concessions to, and long term credits from, the capitalists of the FRG. In addition the Stalinists mounted a permanent, state orchestrated campaign of GDR patriotism to assert the legitimacy of the state. Nonetheless, the ultimate survival of the whole regime was always based on the continuing requirements of the USSR's foreign policy.

The Crisis of the GDR

All these special conditions are now disintegrating before the bewildered eyes of the SED leaders. Driven on by its own crisis, the Gorbachev leadership in the Soviet Union is positively encouraging its satellites to junk their Soviet imposed economic systems and to trade directly with firms in the imperialist countries, above all the FRG. The Soviet bureaucracy, convinced of the impossibility of progress without the aid of imperialist capital, is now embarrassed by the rigid regimes it once installed and maintained with its tanks.

The lack of innovation in the economy of the GDR itself is leading to an increased difficulty in finding markets in the EC for its products. Worse, as Honecker was told in no uncertain terms at the fortieth birthday "celebrations", the Soviet Union would no longer tolerate, much less enforce, the tyrannical regime of the SED and the Stasi (secret police). There was to be no repeat of Tiananmen Square on the Alexanderplatz.

The slow but inevitable shift in the balance of international forces created the background to the destabilisation of the GDR. The regime, however, was also under mounting pressure from its own subjects. Any hopes that the SED might voluntarily relax its grip were disappointed by the blatant rigging of elections in May 1989 and dashed forever by its support for the massacres of oppositionists in China in June. The immediate consequence was increased pressure for emigration, particularly via Hungary which, as part of the pro-western measures of its Stalinists, had opened its borders to Austria.

Although freedom of travel is an elementary right of the working class, emigration clearly could not constitute a way forward for the vast majority in the GDR. However, the wave of emigrants, which turned to a flood after Hungary gave into the FRG's pressure to allow GDR citizens also to cross into Austria, gave a new impetus to those who, rather than flee, were determined to stay and fight. Faced by this, and no longer able to rely on Soviet support, the SED regime was thrown into crisis and sacrificed half of its leadership to try to regain credibility.

Gorbachev's warning to the SED leadership sounded the death knell of Honecker's regime. Without support from the USSR, the East German masses sensed that Honecker could not last and so mobilised on the streets in increasing numbers. Leipzig led the way. Without Kremlin backing the SED had to seek a compromise with the masses; Honecker was dumped and Krenz appeared in charge as a born-again "reformer".

As incapable of independent initiative now as it ever was, the SED leadership is trying, under orders, to mimic the

political tactics of its Polish and Hungarian counterparts and to present itself as the vanguard of reform and renewal. The working class of the GDR will not be taken in by Krenz's sudden conversion from support for the butchers of Tiananmen Square to fulsome praise for political freedoms. For all the charade of negotiations with the "block partners" of the minor parties, the bureaucracy which had made preparations to drown the Leipzig demonstrations in blood still hold the reins of power.

Any serious slackening of the mass movement, any change of direction in the Kremlin, could see the SED turn to reasserting its control by the old methods. The ruling caste is always a danger as long as they have the secret police, the special squads and the military under their control.

Redrawing the map of Europe

The destabilisation and crisis of the GDR has since reacted back upon the international balance of forces, accelerating trends that were already developing beneath the surface. Obviously taken by surprise by the success of its pressure on Hungary in the summer, the government of the FRG under Chancellor Kohl has suddenly become aware of the very considerable political power that its economic weight has brought with it. For the first time in post war history the FRG or, rather, the dominant faction of its bourgeoisie, has given notice that it has its own agenda for the Nineties. For the first time, if only briefly, the mask of pan-Europeanism slipped and the German ruling class stepped forward to march to its own tune—"Deutschland Uber Alles"!

Upon reflection, however, the FRG will take a more cautious approach, formal reunification is likely to be subordinated to the prior restoration of capitalism in the GDR and Eastern Europe, under the effective economic hegemony of the FRG. To this end, German capital will be offered on condition of the removal of the principle obstacles to capitalist development. That is, the destruction of the main pillars of the post-capitalist property relations: nationalisation of industry, planning and the state monopoly of foreign trade. The constitutional framework within which this takes place will be of entirely secondary importance.

Nonetheless, even if Bonn continues to present its strategy as one of "European integration" it will not succeed in allaying the suspicions of its principal imperialist rivals. All of them are, first and foremost, nationally based ruling classes and all of them calculate on the basis of their national class interests.

Thus Mitterrand believes that the centrifugal force of a German expansion in the East can best be negated by rapidly increasing the pace of EC integration, thereby allowing France to become, at least, a favoured junior partner. The dominant Thatcherite faction of the British ruling class, committed to the City's role as a world-wide centre of finance, to Britain's role as a forward position for the USA and to the historic strategy of keeping Europe disunited, wishes to keep Germany divided and insists on the continued threat posed by the Warsaw Pact

However, in the Kremlin, too, the shape of the political map of Europe is being re-considered. The 25 October Warsaw Pact meeting declared for the right of the nations of Eastern Europe to adopt whatever social systems they wish, including the restoration of capitalism. This is the Soviet leadership's chosen tactic for establishing a new basis for peaceful coexistence in the light of

its own rapidly developing political and economic crises. In effect, they are returning to Stalin's post-war plan for a neutral Central Europe. The Kremlin has for the moment excluded from this the possibility of changed frontiers, meaning a re-united Germany. But if the price was right, that is, if a united capitalist Germany were to leave NATO or if part of a treaty was the dissolution or scaling down of both the military alliances, then the USSR's attitude could change.

A united "neutral" Germany would be an imperialist state, just as the "neutral" Austria is. But the Kremlin hopes that a united "neutral" Germany might be provide stability in Central Europe and lavish capital investment for the desperate Soviet economy.

This destabilisation, this disunity and disarray amongst the enemies of the working class, both imperialist and Stalinist, opens up a range of possibilities for the revolutionary movement which were until recently unthinkable. To take advantage of them requires the careful and consistent articulation of a programme which combines defence of the anti-capitalist elements of the economic order of the degenerate workers' states (statified property, planning, state monopoly of foreign trade) with support for working class mass mobilisation and direct action to impose workers' control and workers' democracy. In addition, communists must seek to expose the plans of the imperialists and the Stalinists and to counterpose against them the revolutionary road to the Socialist United States of Europe.

The tasks of revolutionaries in the GDR

Because of its unique history and status, the political crisis in the GDR has not developed as a result simply of increasing economic stagnation and decline. Internally the opposition movement has been characterised by resistance to political repression. Unable to form open political organisations, the opposition took advantage of the rights granted to the churches by the "hardline" Stalinists. Obviously the SED saw the church as a purveyor of religious opium for the "heartless world" of the GDR and even as a force for order and obedience.
Yet in time of crisis the churches provided a meeting place for the oppositionists to group themselves. As a consequence, the churches have gained considerable influence within opposition circles. This is made more significant by the fact that the churches long retained their all-German character, the Evangelical Church until 1979 and the Catholic Church until today.

The opposition has now won for itself the *de facto* right to organise publicly. As it organises itself it will differentiate into more or less politically distinct organisations. At present, this is at an early stage. The most widely visible current, New Forum, includes a spectrum of opinion ranging from SED members to pro-marketeers. It favours a dialogue with the SED regime and, like the church, would prefer the mass demonstrations to subside whilst "round table" talks take place. It has a popular frontist character and could become the vehicle by which pro-marketeers in the SED leadership establish some legitimacy and even a future coalition to oversee the final dismantling of the obstacles to capitalist restoration.

However, in the GDR there are also forces who recognise the need to resolve the crisis in a way that is positive for the working class, opposing the regime but wishing to defend and build on the

post-capitalist economic foundations. They know perfectly well that, "really existing capitalism" includes the unemployed as well as the labour aristocrat, the destruction of social services as well as DM 100 bribes. They recognise that the FRG's spectacular wealth has been sucked out of the immigrant workers from Turkey and Yugoslavia, the semi-colonies of Latin America as well as the working class of the FRG. Even before the fall of Honecker, for example, the United Left's Boehlen Appeal proposed a platform including defence of the post-capitalist property relations as the basis for a "democratic socialism".

The main strategy of such groups appears, to date, to be the formulation of reform initiatives based on the idea of "self-administration" at all levels of society and including factory based workers' organisations. This recognition of the need to reject the bureaucratic dictatorship and to develop a means of controlling and expanding the economy in the interests of the great mass of the population is indeed a vital element of any working class solution to the crisis of the GDR.

However, a serious danger lies in any belief that this can be achieved via reform based on well-intentioned constitutional projects and blueprints. Similarly, a naïve adoption of "self-management" schemes, outside of the fight to retain a centralised planning mechanism, has a marketising logic that leads in the direction not of workers' control but of enterprise profitability.

If the pro-marketeers of the opposition take charge then the working class will have to defend itself from the consequences of introducing "market reforms" in the form of social service cuts and the closure of "uneconomic" factories. If the defenders of the old regime win in the inner party struggle they too will seek to solve the crisis at the expense of working class living standards and their new political rights. This is the lesson to be learnt from the experience of both the rule of the "reformers" in Poland and Hungary as well as of the "hardliners" in China.

The fight to defeat the bureaucracy is a political fight for state power. The organs of a future revolutionary workers' state will be built, initially, as the organs of struggle against the plans of the bureaucracy. Although in the GDR, as in the other degenerate workers' states, this will not require the overthrow of the alien class power of the bourgeoisie, it is nevertheless a revolutionary struggle to smash the repressive machinery of the existing state. The struggle for "political revolution" (as opposed to the "social revolution" necessary against capitalism) therefore, needs the political and organisational forces capable of defeating the state, a revolutionary communist party and workers' councils.

Revolutionaries must seek out every opportunity to relate the spontaneous demands for democracy and freedom to the programme of political revolution. Wherever possible we do not counterpose our demands to those raised spontaneously, but rather utilise every possible variant of the united front tactic to go through the experience of the struggle with the masses, clarifying the class content of competing slogans and programmes at every juncture.

At the present time, the most important priority is to pose the need for independent working class organisation and politics. The Chinese events proved that, on their own, mass mobilisations and demonstrations of "people's power" are not sufficient to take on and overthrow the bastions of Stalinist dictatorship. Against such a perspective, which

informs New Forum's tactics, we call for factory councils of elected and recallable delegates and for autonomous trade unions. Against "round table" talks we propose developing the mass mobilisations into overtly and consciously working class demonstrations, built for by factory-based agitation and organisation. Both as the means of organising the working class for the struggle to destroy bureaucratic rule and as the most effective means for forcing necessary reforms and concessions out of the regime as long as it clings to power we argue for strikes, occupations and workers' demonstrations. We support demands for freedom of political organisation against the Party's monopoly.

To those who believe it is now possible to transform the Party and state unions we argue that this is structurally and politically impossible. If they remain unconvinced, we urge them to put their leaders to the test by demanding internal democracy at all levels of the organisations and the opening of archives to trusted representatives of the workers to reveal the true history of, for example, Soviet control of the Party, collusion in repression of the working class, collaboration with the FRG and all other crimes against the working class.

Really democratic workers' organisations will not be built simply as a better system of administration. From the beginning, factory committees and councils, elected by and recallable to mass meetings of the workforce, must fight to impose workers' control on the workplace. This is not a question of developing "co-management" but a denial of the bureaucracy's "right to manage" and the first step towards working class power in society and control over the economy. Vital to this will be the demand for the "opening of the books" of the management, the planning ministries, the official unions and the party.

There can be little doubt that what will be revealed will be an economy undermined by crisis, chaos, debts and corruption. None of this will be accepted by revolutionary workers as a basis for allowing the bureaucracy's re-imposition of "stability". On the contrary it will be further proof, if it were needed, of the urgent need to oust the whole regime. It will also underline the impossibility of local solutions of the kind often proposed during the political revolutionary crises of other degenerate workers' states—"self-management" or "enterprise autonomy". What will be necessary will be to extend workers' control beyond the factory to its suppliers and customers, to the planning ministries and the distribution agencies.

At every level it must be the workers' themselves who are involved in revealing the facts and imposing their own supervision. In and through these bodies workers must fight for a full scale revision of the plan in the interests of all workers. Collectively the workers must set new goals for the plan that meet the most urgent needs of the masses, which preserve and increase real social equality, which banish privilege. No state functionary should receive more than the wage of a skilled worker. The creativity and knowledge of production and distribution of the working class must be mobilised to replace the diktat of the bureaucrats. GDR workers must strive to replace bureaucratic command planning, not with the anarchy and inequality of the market, but with democratically centralised planning.

From the workers' organisations in the plants and the housing estates recallable delegates should be elected to local, regional and state-wide workers' councils. The ultimate goal of the struggle has to be a government responsible to the work-

ers' councils, a revolutionary workers' government. Such a movement, striking at the very heart of bureaucratic power and privilege, will not be tolerated by the regime without attempts to suppress or to integrate it, just as workers' councils were both suppressed and integrated under the early Weimar Republic. The only guard against this lies in a political leadership that will not lose sight of its goal, the seizure of state power by the workers' councils. A political leadership, moreover, that will prepare the workers' organisations to resist suppression. Such a leadership can only be the product of struggle. We reject categorically any suggestion of a constitutionally guaranteed leading role for any party.

A new revolutionary (Trotskyist) party will on the contrary strive to politically convince the GDR vanguard and so win and retain the loyalty of the revolutionary working class. In doing this such a party will rescue the concept and practice of genuine democratic centralism: the fullest debate and the right for tendencies to organise, alongside disciplined unity in action against the enemy bureaucracy and the imperialists.

This new party will be built by those who prove themselves in struggle to be not only the most determined fighters for workers' power but also the most far-sighted, the most able strategists. Workers' democracy, the only framework in which competing strategies and tactics can be tested in front of the working class is, therefore, an absolute necessity.

Within the workers' movement we stand for open debate and acceptance of majority decisions. We argue for the workers' organisations to deny free speech, however, to fascist and racist organisations and we fight to convince them to reject the programmes of those who, consciously or not, support the restoration of capitalism. An essential component of workers' democracy is free access for the workers' organisations to all mass media. Workers in the printing industry, in broadcasting, cinema and theatre must mobilise to impose workers' control in their industries, demanding right of reply and editorial control for workers' organisations and parties.

In the streets of Leipzig and Berlin the demonstrations have raised the demand of free elections--for freedom of political parties and for the abolition of the "leading role of the SED", that is, for any guaranteed role for it in government. The tyranny, corruption and deceit of the existing system are so manifest to the masses that the defects of bourgeois democracy seem minor by comparison. But they are real nonetheless. A system of four-yearly elections of a few hundred deputies, not accountable thereafter to or controllable by their electors, alongside a permanent and unelected state bureaucracy, police and military force cannot be a vehicle for the class rule of the proletariat or the transition to a classless, stateless society.

Only a system of workers' councils of elected and recallable delegates can perform simultaneously the legislative and executive functions that minimise and progressively eliminate bureaucracy. Only a workers' and popular militia and the universal right to bear arms can prevent the usurpation of political and economic power by a class of exploiters.

In reality parliamentary elections contain endless resources for deceiving the masses both by the SED bureaucrats and by the newly emerging bourgeois and social democratic parties. Thus, either rushed elections before there is full and real freedom of the press, elections with reserved places for the SED or on the other hand indefinite delays could both prolong the rule of the bureaucracy and demobilise the real force for revolu-

tionary change–the mass mobilisation and direct action of the working class. The working class can and should start the process of "free elections" for itself by electing factory committees, town and city workers' councils. In these elections there should be freedom of parties, programmes and platforms so that workers can decide which parties they recognise as their own.

If, however, the bureaucracy is obliged to call parliamentary elections then we call for the workers to call prior mass meetings to select their candidates and to hear the candidates of all the parties. They should demand annual elections and deputies who are recallable by their constituents. They should demand of all candidates a pledge to defend statified and planned property. By these means the fraud of bourgeois parliamentarism can be exposed, its dangers minimised and the principles of a system of workers' councils fought for.

Equally revolutionising measures must be taken throughout society to deny the control of the bureaucracy and its reactionary political ideology in the armed forces, the educational system and in cultural and social organisations. The working class also dare not ignore the presence of Warsaw Pact troops within the GDR, troops used in 1953 to crush the general strike. We demand that they be removed, just as we demand that the NATO troops be kicked out of the BRG, while at the same time resisting chauvinist anti-Russian sentiments and at all times defending the USSR from the intrigues and interventions of the imperialists.

While not recognising the right of the Soviet Union to deploy troops in the GDR and calling on the GDR to break with the Warsaw Pact, the revolutionary working class will see in those rank and file soldiers potential working class allies, not "foreign armies". Through direct contact and fraternisation it will undermine their potential as a repressive force and play a key role in spreading the ideas of political revolution to the most important single force in Europe, the Soviet working class.

The national question in the GDR

Although the division of Germany was a reactionary denial of the right of German self-determination, it resulted in the creation of a degenerate workers' state whose principal economic features are obstacles to capitalist exploitation, the basis for present economic and social advantages and the starting point for future advances of the working class of the GDR. Communists, therefore, oppose in principle the reunification of the GDR and FRG where that entails the destruction of the post-capitalist property relations of the GDR and the expansion of FRG imperialism.

At the present time, the mass movement in the GDR has not generally raised the question of reunification as an immediate issue. This flows partly from the dominance of the official ideology with its constant assertion of the legitimacy of the state, partly from a "realistic" assessment of what the imperialists and the USSR would allow and partly from a recognition of the reactionary character of the FRG.

Nonetheless, it is almost inconceivable that continued political crisis in the GDR will not see the emergence of reunification as a possible solution to economic weakness and political instability. Therefore, the demand for the revolutionary reunification of Germany is not a subordinate or merely tactical one but rather a central component of the programme. This does not imply that a

reunited Germany is a necessary precondition for a victorious workers' revolution in Europe.

We recognise, however, that the national question in the GDR is an Achilles' heel which does not exist in any of the other East European degenerate workers' states. A revolutionary answer to this specific problem would even have a decisive significance if nationalist illusions came to prominence in the consciousness of the proletariat. Communists must emphasise that there certainly can be no solution to the problems of the GDR within its own borders. In this context we also recognise the huge economic weight of the FRG and its capacity to support the economic reconstruction and development of all the degenerate workers' states. However, revolutionaries will oppose the idea that this could be achieved by reunification under the imperialist FRG.

The prosperity of the FRG is not a result of any inherent superiority of the capitalist system. Throughout its post war history, the German ruling class, based in the FRG, has benefited from the existence of its Stalinist controlled neighbour. Ideologically it helped to bind the working class of the FRG to its capitalist, but "democratic" master and economically it has supplied both skilled labour (in droves before the building of The Wall) and access to East European markets. Now, as an export-led economy facing the prospect of a recession and consequent downturn in world trade, the ruling class of the FRG sees the crisis of the GDR and the other degenerate workers' states as an opportunity not only for maintaining, even expanding, production but as the basis for a whole new role for itself in the European and world order.

The bosses in the FRG are already calculating how best to profit from the crisis of Stalinism, how to undercut wage rates with "refugee" labour, where to relocate industry, where to obtain cheaper raw materials. The engineering employers are already demanding a return to the forty hour week abolished by trade union pressure in the mid-1980s. To safeguard their own interests and those of the workers of the GDR, the workers of the FRG must oppose their bosses' plans. They must learn to speak to their bosses in the same language as the Polish, Russian and GDR workers–that of the mass strike and demonstration. They must demand not only equal pay and equal rights for all workers but also an end to the current offensive against the GDR. As long as the GDR is based on post-capitalist property relations its right to exist must be defended, the FRG must recognise its legitimacy and its citizenship.

Revolutionaries in the FRG will also demand the opening of the books of the capitalists who have profited from trading contacts with the degenerate workers' states. They will demand the creation of direct links between rank and file working class organisations on both sides of the border and the granting of no-strings credit and aid to the GDR. Against plans to re-incorporate the GDR into the FRG as part of the restoration of capitalism, we counterpose the progressive potential for the whole of Europe of a revolutionary reunification of Germany, the overthrow of the capitalist state in the FRG and of the Stalinists in the GDR.

Fight social democracy

Before the division of Germany, the SPD was the majority party of the German working class, despite its history of suppression of the workers' movement in 1919 and its clearing of the way to the

victory of the Nazis before 1933. Today, it is to be expected that many workers in the GDR, formerly one of the main regions of SPD support, will see the creation of a new social democratic party as the political expression of their interests.

The prospect of a form of re-unification of Germany on a social democratic basis might appear a more acceptable, less reactionary, one than subordination to the historic class enemy represented in Bonn by the CDU, CSU and Liberals. Certainly, in Hungary and Poland, illusions in a peaceful, prosperous social democratic future can be seen to have developed. In those countries this is fantasy since their economies could not foreseeably generate the wealth necessary to sustain the reforms and concessions to organised labour that a social democratic regime, on the Scandinavian model, would require.

However, this is not necessarily the case for a re-united Germany. All the structures and mechanisms for this already exist in the FRG, and many of them in the GDR as well. What is lacking is the economic and financial base to maintain an enlarged FRG. The only possible basis would be the subordination of other economies to that of Germany, the semi-colonialisation, for example, of Eastern Europe.

Such a development would be a disaster for the working class of the whole of Europe, reviving nationalism in all its sections and preparing the basis for future conflicts. The working class of Germany must oppose this strategy and take up the fight for true internationalism in Europe. Both the SPD and the trade union federation, the DGB, should be forced to reveal their relations with both Stalinists and restorationists in the GDR.

In Portugal, in the mid-1970s, the SPD was the major financier of the Socialist Party which aborted workers' revolution against dictatorship and was the main instrument for claiming back for the bourgeoisie the gains of the mass struggles of 1974. They are already planning to repeat this tactic in the GDR. The party of Noske and Scheidemann is preparing to do the dirty work of the German bourgeoisie once again! It must be stopped by the opposition of its own working class base!

The progressive content of re-unification can be summed up as the reunification of the German working class. Revolutionaries will agitate and organise for the right of working class organisation across the border at every level, from factory to national party and trade unions.

- For the right of free access to all parts of both states for the workers of both states !
- For the right to take solidarity action with workers in struggle across the border!
- For the opening of the archives of both states to reveal the secrets of their security police and the involvement of foreign powers and the agents of the Nazi regime in the construction and consolidation of both states!
- For the opening of the books of companies and states to reveal the true extent of cross-border collaboration between Stalinists and imperialists !

Workers' organisations must also build direct links with the already existing workers' movements of Eastern Europe. Their common experience and common problems can become the source of strength for a new international workers' movement that will not be divided and weakened by the cramping ideology of nationalism and its Stalinist perversion, "socialism in one country". Comecon has failed even to integrate the

Eastern European economies to the extent achieved by the capitalists of Western Europe but the existing economic links and natural geographical coherence of Central Europe provide a solid foundation for an expanded division of labour and economic revitalisation.

- Down with Stalinist and imperialist plans to restore capitalism !
- For political revolution in the degenerate workers' states! For socialist revolution in the capitalist states!
- For workers' councils and workers' militia throughout Germany and the convocation of a congress of workers' councils as the organ of state power of the German Workers' Republic!
- For the radical revision of the centralised plan in the interests of the workers!
- For the revolutionary reunification of Germany!
- For the United Socialist States of Europe!

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21 November 1989

The League for a Revolutionary Communist International

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