

## East Germans vote with feet against U.S.-Soviet deal

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche and Rainer Apel

Over the first week of October, television viewers around the world saw two scenes which said more than words about the obscene alliance which the administration of U.S. President George Bush has entered into with the Soviet dictatorship: First, viewers witnessed West German embassy officials in Prague and Warsaw pulling East Germans to safety inside the embassy grounds, often while police attempted to drag them away from their chance for freedom. And then the next scene, in West Berlin: a United States embassy official, brutally forcing an East German woman *back* into the arms of the waiting East German *Volkspolizei*. It was as if the U.S. official were saying, "Don't give *us* your huddled masses yearning to breathe free!"

On Oct. 1, some 4,000 East Germans who had crowded into the West German embassy in Prague, and another 1,000 in the Warsaw embassy, were put on trains bound for West Germany, following hasty negotiations between the West German government and East bloc officials. As the trains passed through—some of them back through East German territory on their way West—there was an explosion of happiness; all along the train's route, East Germans could be seen dancing in the streets, with people shouting "Freedom!"

Two days later, after these embassies had been emptied, 11,000 more East Germans stormed into the embassy in Prague. Young people, generally from 20 to 25 years old, with children in tow, pushed through barricades as they were clobbered by police, and then ran even more quickly than the police deployed to stop them.

All of this was taking place only 72 hours before the 40th

anniversary of the German Democratic Republic, featuring a great celebration of the "triumph of socialism" and a visit by Mikhail Gorbachov.

As of this writing, many of the released East Germans are still sitting in trains. But 10,000 police of various kinds have now surrounded the Prague embassy and are stationed along the border and along the route the trains are supposed to travel into West Germany, since the authorities want to prevent people from jumping on the moving train along the way. A dramatic escalation is expected when the train goes through the last, mountainous area before the Czech-West German border, where it must reduce its speed. Large groups of youth are already reportedly in the mountains there, waiting to jump aboard.

In East Germany, police forced thousands out of train stations as they attempted to board trains into Czechoslovakia. Then, on Oct. 4, the feared and expected announcement came: "For the time being," East Germans seeking to "vacation" in Czechoslovakia would henceforth be required to acquire special visas.

But the German Democratic Republic's 40th anniversary celebration promises to be far from peaceful. Helmut Schmidt, the former West German chancellor, warned on Oct. 4 that one could expect at least a situation like the "Prague spring" in 1968, and possibly a full uprising, similar to Hungary in 1956.

One source characterized the situation thus: "We are seeing the ultimate stage of the decrepitude and decadence of the Communist empire, which is making its citizens flee in panic and desperation. But, in the West, there are no wise

moves—not even passive thinking. People who should have been making contingency plans are in a daze; they have no strategy. The experts who should work out contingency plans are in a daze.”

### **‘Tank therapy’**

The expert also voiced what East Germans have known for some time: “The Soviets are now preparing for a massive showdown in the Empire, a bloody confrontation. They’ll crack down very seriously in a number of trouble-spots, I’m sure, and they’ll probably secure the tacit acceptance of the Western powers. I’m sure the Soviets are saying to the West, ‘Don’t interfere, we’ll be all right.’ So, as they move, they’ll do so in a totally unembarrassed way. They’ll revert to the usual methods, what people in the know refer to as ‘tank therapy.’ And that ‘therapy’ will be applied with great enthusiasm.”

Another source said, in effect, that the game of Erich Honecker, East Germany’s octogenarian dictator, is over. “He gambled for time, hoping the situation in Moscow would stabilize, but the opposite has happened. Now decisions are unavoidable. There will be uncontrolled riots. Just imagine what will happen if in the celebrations, people do not shout, ‘Long live Honecker!’ but whistle and boo instead? In the shortest time, this will go totally out of control. The Soviets want Honecker out; they want somebody with a firmer profile but the same policies. This is a breaking point, and in the next 72 hours, you will see the first signs of this.”

### **Who are the refugees?**

There has been much propaganda in the Western media that the East Germans fleeing into the West are simply the young hotheads who have become too impatient to await the wonderful benefits of Moscow’s *perestroika* economic restructuring plan. Nothing could be further from the truth. The following information has emerged from *EIR*’s face-to-face interviews with refugees who have just made it into the West and are currently at holding-camps in the Rhine-Main region of West Germany.

These young East Germans are the generation that grew up entirely under the Communist system of education. But the official East German propaganda for the “socialist nation-state of the G.D.R.,” transmitted through the paramilitary youth organizations, has certainly never taken root with them. When they speak of “the zone” they escaped from, they are referring to the “Soviet Occupied Zone”—the name that was used for this region from 1945 through 1949. Their use of that term—which has been edged out of the Western vocabulary, especially since the 1970s “*détente*” period—describes the reality: The East German “state” is, by its revised constitution of 1973, bound into an “eternal and unchallengeable alliance with the Soviet Union”; the German Democratic Republic’s economy is densely woven into the Soviet

system of looting, having 40-45% of its foreign trade with the Russians.

Many refugees characterized the economic situation as considerably worse than 10 or 15 years ago. Until 1980-81, the German Democratic Republic’s raw material imports were more diversified, and there was a certain maneuvering-room; hard coal shipments from neighboring Poland were dominant. But the Polish crisis of 1980-81 and the imposition of martial law there reduced these coal shipments to almost zero. Soviet coal had to fill the gap. In return, the G.D.R. had to ship more fertilizers, machinery, electric equipment, micro-electronic products, and textiles to the Soviet Union.

Investments had to be pulled out from housing, medical care, and agriculture, to meet the increased quotas set by the Soviets. The G.D.R. also had to take over costs, directly or by compensation, of the 1980s program for restructuring and modernization—*perestroika*—of the Soviet armed forces stationed in East Germany.

In tandem with the increased demands from Moscow, working conditions were made immensely harsher. The SED party daily *Neues Deutschland*, for example, carried a report on Sept. 16 by a young worker at the Karl Marx microelectronics combine in Erfurt, that “it was expected that the annual output would be four million chips, 1.5 million more than originally planned.”

The drastic investment cuts in the industry at large, especially in infrastructure and consumer goods production, has caused, over the past few years, a process of impoverishment and a mood of revolt against the system.

### **No future for families**

Inside this system of intense looting, young East Germans who are still planning to have a family, with a three-room apartment of their own and the like, see no chance of ever “making it.” Their physical living situation is horrendous. For example, medical care: Young mothers are finding that there is no available hospital capacity where they can give birth to their babies. Gynecologists and nurses, surgeons and anesthesiologists are rare, and the quality of medicine is bad. No syringes, no vaccine, no capsules outside of standard pills against everything and nothing, are the reality in the G.D.R. hospitals.

Young G.D.R. families have severe problems finding an apartment to live in, or even a room of their own. What sense does it make to sign up on the waiting list for an apartment that will not be built in the next three to five years? What sense does it make to look for a job appropriate to one’s skills in a city that has no apartments? What sense does it make to stand in line for some baby food that is sold out, or for the three bananas which a three-person family may be able to buy, sporadically.

There is a deep conviction among the young East Germans, that “nothing will ever change under this regime.” They know that their own parents and grandparents went

through this kind of brutal Soviet “primitive accumulation” in the immediate postwar years, the 1950s and early 1960s. The late 1960s and the 1970s saw a marginal improvement of their living conditions, but the 1980s brought a collapse again.

All of these problems have been brought up again and again, by workers in the plants, by hospital personnel, even at SED party-base meetings. The SED leaders have responded by simply passing on the directives from Moscow: “nyet”—no change.

“Is there any life before death?” is a question many of the young East German refugees asked in personal discussions with *EIR*. Their dramatic and adventurous escape from East Germany in the weeks of September and early October gave the answer: certainly there is no life in the Soviet Occupied Zone.

Desperation to get out now before it is too late, is the dominant motive among the East German youth to make it into the West at all costs. Statements such as, “This was probably the last chance to get out,” or, “Soon, this will no longer be possible,” were made by many refugees in front of Western television cameras and radio microphones. The overriding feeling was that all borders will be closed, and all visas for travel into other East bloc countries canceled, following Oct. 7.

There is a further reason why most of the refugees are aged 20-24. Especially with young men, this is the age category of East German army reservists who would likely be called up for active duty in the uniform-bearing “workers militia” *Kampfgruppen*, in order to break up protest rallies, riots, and the like. The young East Germans simply don’t want to be around to be ordered to fire on unarmed protesters. And shooting has been rehearsed: Special exercises have been held over the past few months, to prepare the *Kampfgruppen* for street-level confrontations with rebellious oppositionals.

The coming crackdown was addressed in the following terms by the West German Minister of Third World Affairs, Jürgen Warnke, in an interview with the daily *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung* Oct. 4: “There is fear among certain circles of the G.D.R. population that the SED party could deploy its well-organized state security machine down to the *Kampfgruppen*, to secure its power. Also the presence of 400,000 Soviet soldiers in the G.D.R. shows which risks are implied for both sides in violent confrontation.”

This fear was dominant at an unprecedented 25,000-strong protest rally held Oct. 2 in the city of Leipzig—the biggest held since the June 1953 uprising. Slogans on banners included “We shall overcome, Freedom, Freedom,” but also, “Never again another China.” “There is fear that very soon, there will be violent clashes, there is such an explosive mood in the population. We are afraid there will be many deaths,” declared one young woman who had just made it into the West.

## Beijing-East Berlin axis tightens grip

by Mary M. Burdman

Even as tens of thousands flee East Germany in well-founded fear of a repetition, in the heart of Europe, of the June 4 massacre of students in Beijing’s Tiananmen Square, the clouds of crisis are also gathering again in Communist China, East Germany’s staunchest friend. The “Beijing-East Berlin Axis”—with Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, the third partner—is consolidating its forces, not only to face external condemnation, but also to deal with terrible internal crises. Both the Chinese and East German regimes celebrate 40 years of power the first week of October, and they are using “diplomatic” exchanges to issue blunt warnings to their own populations and the world, that they will maintain that power through whatever military means necessary.

The Chinese leadership has been issuing threats right and left. Chairman Deng Xiaoping’s newly appointed leadership gave its first press conference Sept. 25, and Prime Minister Li Peng and Communist Party Secretary General Jiang Zemin both asserted that the June 4 crackdown had done nothing to change Beijing’s determination to achieve the “reunification of [Taiwan] with the motherland”—and Jiang said that the regime will not rule out the use of force. Jiang also reiterated that Hong Kong was being used to “subvert” the Beijing government.

Although Li Peng said there was no timetable for re-taking Taiwan, just the fact that the leadership threatened violence should be a warning, since Deng Xiaoping has vowed to re-take Taiwan by the end of the 1980s.

Jiang Zemin began the four-day anniversary celebrations in Beijing with an 80-minute speech harkening back to the Communist bloc’s “we will bury you” phase of the 1950s. Jiang stated that the Chinese Communist Party is “fully confident of the Communist future of the human race,” and warned China of the “reactionary international forces [that] have never abandoned their fundamental position of hostility toward the socialist system. . . . The struggle against infiltration and counter-infiltration, subversion and counter-subversion” of the socialist countries towards capitalism “will last for a long time.”

Tensions have escalated internally and externally since