

Agriculture by Suzanne Rose

'Food for Peace' tours farm states

An East German agricultural leader showed discouraged U.S. farmers how to fight for and win political freedom.

On Sept. 10-24 seven people speaking as Food for Peace activists from the U.S., Germany, and Australia toured 13 states and held 11 public meetings on the growing danger of world food shortages. The delegation proposed solutions to the farm crisis U.S. farmers battered by depression conditions for over a decade. These included the need to protect the world's family farmers by eliminating the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the need to support credit and infrastructure policies as outlined by the American economist and political prisoner Lyndon LaRouche to increase food production.

Of special interest to the audiences of 20-40 farmers in each locale, people still active in the political resistance to the farm foreclosures which have swept the Midwest and eliminated over 500,000 farmers since 1980, was the message of East German farm leader Maik Ehrig. Ehrig, a regional board member of the new German Farmers' Association (VDL), told farmers worn out from battles with government agencies that the people in East Germany too had lost hope. They thought they would have to live forever with the Wall. It was the communist elites' "arrogance of power" and the people's refusal to tolerate further repression which brought people together to open the Wall.

His description of forced collectivization in East Germany under the communists hit home with farmers who have been victimized by federal agencies, the FBI, and state police forces during the mass foreclosures of the 1980s. His account of the political mobilization process leading to the fall of the Wall was fascinating to

U.S. farmers who had been led to believe that it was "international bankers" or Gorbachov who opened the Wall in favor of new, more insidious forms of social control. To hear that it was the result of conscious action by a people determined to free themselves was very inspiring to them.

At two meetings farmers said they had read in a prestigious American farm journal that the reporter couldn't find anyone in East Germany who wanted to return to family farming. Ehrig confirmed that the media lies, by pointing out that his organization, which seeks the return of the family farm, numbers over 40,000 people. Establishment media had no role in building the VDL. He thanked the Schiller Institute for promoting its ideas accurately in print. He said that the media in East Germany today is still controlled by supporters of the old regime. Farmers profusely thanked him for coming and congratulated the East Germans for their courage against the oppressor.

American Food for Peace organizers Suzanne Rose and Gene Schenk told the farmers that "the revolution is coming here." Rose said that the economic breakdown crisis which had prompted East bloc citizens to seek freedom would be soon forcing million of Americans into the streets. There would be new rounds of murderous budget cuts and farm foreclosures leading Americans to reject the "post-industrial" policies of the Wall Street and London financiers which have ruined production over the past 25 years. She outlined the Food for Peace approach of Lyndon LaRouche from his Oct. 12, 1988 press conference in Berlin. LaRouche called for a

"peace through development perspective," especially infrastructure development, on the part of Western nations to channel the ferment he expected over the next year in the communist sector into positive results for mankind.

At every meeting some farmer would say, "There is nothing we can do. The cartels control everything." Farmers even offered suggestions to Ehrig's new organization which showed the severe pessimism which has infected U.S. farm organizers. "You have to get around the cartels," they said. "Don't do business with any bankers." Schenk and Rose criticized the methods employed by U.S. farm organizations which had helped to lower morale. "We have to adopt new methods of organizing so that when the economic crisis hits the population and causes them to protest we can organize them to rebuild the economy," said Rose. She said that the existing farm organizations refused to stand by principles of a political offensive against the cartels which had been begun by Mr. LaRouche during the 1980 presidential campaign. Instead, they made deals with cartel-dominated politicians.

"You can't look for easy answers and solutions which begin and end with the word parity. This crisis means that farmers who today represent 2% of the population here are going to have to link up with other sections of the population facing hunger as the economy disintegrates. We are going to have to have a new civil rights movement based on the inalienable rights of all men to development." Farmers were forced to look at the collapsing infrastructure in the U.S., the abandoned rail lines, the water and power shortages. "You can't farm unless you are concerned with all aspects of the economy," said Rose and Schenk.