

Editorial

‘We Are the People’

Exactly 20 years ago, on Sept. 4, 1989, the first Leipzig Monday Rally took place, with several hundred citizens taking to the streets, in what was then communist East Germany, demanding the freedom to travel and freedom of speech. Even arrests by the special police of the State Security Agency, the Stasi, who deployed in great numbers, could not crush the protest rally, which was joined by a couple hundred more. The genie was out of the bottle.

Only three weeks later, on Sept. 25, 20,000 took to the streets of Leipzig, chanting the famous civil rights song “We Shall Overcome,” among others. By the end of September, their numbers had increased to 40,000. And, protest rallies began to spread to many other cities.

Then, from October on, the number of protesters exploded: In Leipzig alone, a quarter-million people joined for a mass rally, and another quarter-million protested in other East German cities. Already, during September, the famous “*Wir sind das Volk*” (“We Are the People”) became the rallying cry of the demonstrations. Despite threats, and plans for a violent crackdown, the East German government could not find the will to shoot. The escalation peaked on Nov. 9, when, to echo a Biblical phrase, the Berlin Wall came tumbling down.

The peaceful German Revolution of 1989 is perhaps the best example we have today, for understanding the mass-strike phenomenon that has now broken out in the United States, and promises to spread internationally. The East Germans had been an oppressed people for 56 (!) years, living, first, under the Hitler dictatorship, and then, under the East German communist dictatorship. They had feared to speak to their neighbors about any

complaint—indeed, subsequent records showed that every neighborhood, if not every family, contained an informant for the secret police.

But suddenly, within just weeks after the East German leader Erich Honecker proclaimed that socialism would last forever, that quiescent people exploded, demanding that their government give them freedoms which had been denied. They had the force of morality behind them, and they won.

The tragedy of the 1989 Revolution is that the only leadership which could have realized its promise, by throwing off the global usurious monetary system, and establishing a new community of sovereign nation-states collaborating for economic development, was not able to prevail. Instead, puppets of the British imperial monetarist system blackmailed Germany into submission to its demands—and aborted the process.

The mass strike process of today has some distinct parallels with that of 1989. There is a broad popular disenchantment and disbelief in the institutions of government, and a willingness to act against the constraints of “public opinion.” After many decades, American citizens are determined to assert their rights as citizens against those who would disregard, or threaten, their lives and their future. And the mood of revolt is growing.

Fortunately, one very significant difference between Germany 1989, and the U.S.A. 2009, is the potential for leadership. After 40 years of mass organizing in the United States, and a stunning record of success in forecasting the current crisis, Lyndon LaRouche and his movement are in a strong position to mobilize the mass ferment for a durable solution to the economic and political breakdown. This time, we will not miss the opportunity.