

## E. Germany 'celebrates' its 40th anniversary with bloody crackdown

The German Democratic Republic celebrated its 40th anniversary the weekend of Oct. 6 by imposing virtual martial law on the country—sealing the borders, deploying soldiers and police on every street corner, and beating and jailing citizens who dared to demonstrate for freedom. Said one weeping demonstrator, “I speak for the youth of East Germany. I have never seen anything like this—water cannons and clubs used against our own people! But I feel that people have to know how bad it actually is here.”

One West German observer described the audience listening to the “festive speeches” by Communist leaders Erich Honecker and Mikhail Gorbachov: “I have seldom seen such sad faces at a birthday party.” Even the liberal *Washington Post* was prompted to headline its coverage of the weekend’s developments with the warning that a new “Tiananmen Square”-style massacre may be in the offing.

Thus does the mask of *glasnost* begin to fall, exposing the true face of Soviet communism. For contrary to the “expert analyses” in the U.S. press, there is no fundamental clash here between Honecker and Gorbachov. The Soviets would prefer that East Berlin handle the growing unrest with its own tanks; but failing that, the Red Army is ready to intervene. As a leading Central European military expert told *EIR*, “Gorbachov and Honecker are closer together in most ways than they are apart. Gorbachov has no intention whatsoever to challenge the leading role of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union. He may accept changes in personnel and in party statutes, but not in fundamentals. Also, the Soviets have no intention of compromising with their ‘Elbe Line’ view of the absolute strategic significance of the G.D.R.”

### Flamboyant display of military force

The official festivities in East Berlin led off with a massive military parade, at whose head marched the elite East German airborne troops. A featured event was the parachute drop by naval *spetsnaz* frogmen, roughly the G.D.R. equivalent of U.S. Navy Seals. This was the first time that such a display of special commando forces had been staged at East Berlin’s annual Oct. 7 military parade, and was a clear, provocative message of the doctrinal emphasis Moscow and its stooges have placed on airborne *spetsnaz* units.

Compare that to the coverage on ABC television in the United States, which showed smiling young faces in the official torchlight parade as evidence that “not everybody wants to leave East Germany”!

The Soviets, acting through their East German puppets, closed all the border crossings from West to East Berlin, including “Checkpoint Charlie” at Friedrichstrasse. Only official Allied personnel and accredited journalists were admitted through. On the night of Oct. 6, barricades of concrete and steel were erected in front of Checkpoint Charlie. The action to seal the border by the East Germans, who would not have dared to do so without Russian orders, is a flagrant violation of the 1971 Four-Power Agreement on Berlin. Yet there has been no protest against this outrage from the Western powers (the United States, Britain, and France).

At the same time, East Germany’s borders with Poland and Czechoslovakia were fortified by troops and paramilitary construction battalions, to stop the hemorrhage of refugees. Barbed wire fences are under construction on the border with Poland. On the border with Czechoslovakia, patrols by border guards on both sides have been intensified, and Czech guards have the order to shoot anyone trying to cross. According to Prague government sources, some 400 East Germans were caught trying to cross the border in the past five days preceding the start of East Berlin’s “celebrations.”

In sum, East Germany, with a population of 16.8 million, is being systematically locked up in a barbed wire cage.

Despite the police-state moves, demonstrations for freedom were held all over the country, including a 70,000-person rally in Leipzig—the largest demonstration since the 1953 uprising which was crushed by Soviet tanks (see *Report from Bonn*, page 49). In Dresden, 2,000 rallied on Oct. 6, and the “People’s Police” and *Kampfgruppen* militia swooped in to beat and arrest protesters. The same thing happened in Magdeburg, where 54 out of 500 marchers were arrested and face prison sentences of up to two years. Similar events occurred in Potsdam, Halle, and other cities. On Oct. 7, several marches of 5-7,000 people in East Berlin itself were forcibly disbanded by crack units of the Stasi secret police. This occurred only after Western journalists had been chased away, beaten, or arrested.

The correspondent of the West German daily *Süddeutsche Zeitung* filed a shocking eyewitness report of the brutality in the police “detention” cellars. Albrecht Hinze was arrested on Oct. 7 along with numerous young East Germans. They were brought to the infamous Rummelsburg prison, then transferred to the new police barracks in the Berlin suburb of Marzahn, where they were put in a huge cellar, hands against the wall, and beaten with sticks. Hinze, who had not revealed his real identity, then had to show his passport, showing him to be a West German journalist. Police separated him from the others, and he was interrogated for several hours. Upon his release at 5:00 the next morning, he was told, “Have a nice day in our city!”