



1991 - A new beginning for German workers

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Introduction

The political revolutionary upsurge in the German Democratic Republic during 1989-90 destroyed the Socialist Unity Party (SED) which had ruled on behalf of the Stalinist bureaucracy since the foundation of the state in 1949.

Like all ruling Stalinist parties, a major part of its membership consisted of place-seekers, managers and functionaries whose adherence to the party provided access to material privileges and power. With the collapse of the old regime this parasitic layer's nominal commitment to Stalinised 'Marxism' vanished, along with the social advantages of party membership.

The majority of factory managers and bureaucrats left the party. With characteristic cynicism many sought to preserve their personal influence by joining Kohl's CDU. Worker members of the party, who had been obliged to join in order to receive training and advancement in their allocated sphere of employment, left the SED in droves as soon as it was safe to do so.

Once the SED/PDS recognised that it would not be able to stabilise the highly charged political atmosphere which existed under its own rule, its leadership, under Modrow and Gysi, capitulated to the West German bourgeoisie and accepted the reunification of Germany on a capitalist basis.

Since then the PDS has sought to reconstitute itself as a loyal and legalist social democratic opposition, embracing the market and bourgeois democracy while affecting a radical posture with environmentalist and bourgeois feminist policy statements. Yet the PDS leadership have faced difficulties in carrying through their desired transformation of the party. This is largely due to the character of its remaining membership and structure, and the nature of its support.

The present composition of the SED/PDS

The PDS still has hundreds of thousands of members in workplaces and estates across the East. In the December elections they polled around 11% in the former GDR. These votes come, not from former bureaucrats, but from sections of workers and intellectuals fearing the effects of the reintroduction of capitalism on their jobs and social security. They imagine that the PDS is the only party which could cushion the blows that Bonn will aim at the East German working class' living standards.

Yet the party has not sought to mobilise its working class base in struggle, nor to provide any militant opposition to the redundancies and closures that have swept the East. To do so would undermine its attempt to gain bourgeois respectability and parliamentary credentials. Yet, not to do so stands in contrast to the needs of its working class members.

Internal consequences

At the same time the PDS's formal rejection of the SED's Stalinist ideology has had an impact on the party's internal organisation. In reaction against its past the PDS has become a hotch-potch of differing interest groups, tendencies and commissions. However, this appearance of genuine party democracy actually provides no formal mechanism for controlling the party leadership, which continues to operate behind the membership's backs. This explosion of debate around programmatic, theoretical and historical questions has enabled tendencies within the party to emerge that have

sought to oppose the leadership's drive to social democratisation.

Of course, the members of the PDS are not the only workers in the former GDR whose political ideas have been shaken by the events of the last eighteen months. Those, particularly in the South, who drove the Stalinists from power in the belief that unification would bring rapid rises in living standards have had their illusions sorely weakened. What sets many PDS members aside is their continued opposition to capitalist solutions and their subjective commitment to socialism.

Revolutionaries enter the PDS

This cannot be sustained forever against the defeats and demoralisation that will flow from their leaders' politics. German supporters of the LRCI have therefore joined the PDS with the express aim of fighting for the ideas of unfalsified Trotskyism as the solution to the acute crisis of leadership facing the German working class.

This has, of course, attracted howls of criticism from centrist organisations active in the former GDR. The Spartacists have accused the LRCI of accommodating to the PDS's social democratic leadership while the German adherents of David North's 'International Committee of the Fourth International' have, no less predictably, denounced our comrades for acting as the Stalinist's 'fifth column'.

What our accusers have in common is their inability to distinguish between membership of the PDS and political adaptation to its leadership. On their part this reflects an unconscious recognition that with their political method these groups would not be able to maintain a revolutionary line against the pressure of the leadership.

The document reproduced here is the platform which our comrades are organising around within the PDS. Its revolutionary character is plain for all to see and requires no further comment here. In the coming months, as the consequences of unification for the whole German working class begin to unfold, our comrades will be fighting to win PDS members to support the demands and slogans of this platform as they intervene in the class struggle.

As serious militants grapple with the fundamental questions facing the class, it will be the supporters of the LRCI who will attract the best of them to the building of a new revolutionary Trotskyist organisation in Germany.

Call for the foundation of a Trotskyist Platform in the PDS

The last year has seen a political earthquake: the overthrow of the old Stalinist bureaucracy, the restoration of capitalism in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the reunification of Germany. The entire socialist movement is now posed a burning question: how should the working class respond to the attacks which face us from the ruling class of the new, united Germany?

The Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) is in a unique position to develop an answer to this question. It remains a mass party with links to the working class in East Germany, if only to a minority of it. The old Stalinist leadership and the majority of the bureaucrats and directors have long since left. The party presents itself as open, has adopted new democratic structures and has begun to undertake a renewal process and consequently a thoroughgoing theoretical and programmatic debate within its ranks.

The PDS faces a clear alternative: either to continue on its current course towards social democracy, albeit with a slight radical colouration, or to transform itself into a party which really seeks to lead a consistent struggle for the interests of the workers.

For all its apparent modern efficiency capitalism is a system of economic anarchy which adheres to one fundamental principle: production for profit. For a handful of exploiters it is a paradise; for the great majority of the population it is a life of wage slavery, no matter what level wages may be. Marx and Engels, the founders of scientific socialism, maintained that in this society the interests of the workers and their capitalist exploiters are directly and irreconcilably opposed. The attacks on the living standards and social gains of the workers of the former GDR as a direct consequence

of Kohl's anschluss, are merely further proof of the validity of this statement.

The logic of the 'social market economy'—namely making production profitable for the capitalists—has led to the closure of whole sections of industry, to mass unemployment, to social insecurity and the prospect of massive tax increases. This logic allows the employers, despite all their promises of democracy, to impose ever greater restrictions on the workers' right to defend themselves. The competition between bourgeois nation states continually threatens to plunge the world into wars of plunder for the control of international markets and sources of raw materials. Imperialism—monopoly capitalism—has led to the enslavement of whole nations and continents in semi-colonial servitude.

Any workers' party which accepts the fundamental logic of the capitalist system will become an agency within the workers' movement for the enforcement of the interests of capital. If the PDS goes further down the road of social democratisation, if the renewal process leads to the acceptance of the market economy as the defining principle of economic and political life, then this will have catastrophic consequences for the working class members and sympathisers of the party. It will mean that the PDS will support, and even defend, cuts in social spending. The party will have to accept and justify factory closures and countless other attacks on the workers on grounds of 'realism and necessity', that is, on the basis of the logic of the capitalist profit system.

It would be a tragedy if the PDS's break with Stalinism simply led to the adoption of an equally reactionary ideology, namely social democratic collaboration with imperialist capital. Is there an alternative? We say?yes!

If the PDS wants to base its politics on the consistent defence of working class interests then it must develop and adopt a programme of militant opposition to capitalism. It must return to the established aim of Liebknecht, Luxemburg and Lenin—to overthrow the capitalists and their economic system. It must set itself the goal of making the only real alternative to capitalism a reality: a planned economy under the leadership and control of democratically elected and accountable organs of workers' power! This was what the Bolsheviks under Lenin and the Left Opposition under Trotsky fought for. It is in complete counter-position to the bureaucratic and despotic deformation and caricature of such a planned economy under Stalin, Ulbricht or Honecker. It is an economic system that cannot survive on the basis of the productive forces of one country—still less on the basis of half a country like the GDR! Such a healthy workers' state would have to fight for the extension of socialist planning throughout the world.

Many will say that this is an unrealistic goal—especially now, when the collapse of 'really existing socialism' is so clearly apparent. On the contrary, it is an illusion to imagine that capitalism can be made to operate in the interests of the workers, of the exploited of all countries, or that the capitalists will willingly give up their power and domination. The PDS must fight for a programme of concrete demands linking day to day struggles with the strategic task of overthrowing the capitalist state's repressive apparatus and replacing it with the political and economic power of democratic workers' councils. This transitional method is the core of the programme that we set out below.

We appeal to all PDS members who really want to fight the rule of the German bourgeoisie to join us in building a Trotskyist platform in the party which would fight for the PDS to adopt such a political perspective. We call on all comrades to discuss our positions practically and fraternally. The renewal process in the PDS is not yet over, its results not finally decided, and we see our work in the PDS as a contribution to the solution of the current crisis of the left.

The PDS has set itself the task of rehabilitating the political currents and workers' leaders who have been defamed, oppressed, silenced and killed for so long by the Stalinists. But in doing this it has forgotten Leon Trotsky—Lenin's comrade-in-arms in the October Revolution, co-founder of the Soviet Union, leader of the Red Army in the civil war, prominent fighter in the Left Opposition against the developing bureaucratic dictatorship, founder of the Fourth International, slandered and ultimately murdered by Stalin. It is high time that Trotskyism had a voice and a presence inside the PDS.

A draft action programme

The Kohl government wants to make the workers East and West pay the costs of the anschluss. Against this we say:

Make the bosses pay!

No to all factory closures, whether on 'economic' grounds or not! The PDS must call for strike action against all redundancies and for occupations against all threatened closures.

No to all cheap labour! Equal pay for equal work?at Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) levels! Against the threat of inflation we must fight for the introduction of a sliding scale of wages linked to a price index drawn up by independent committees of workers and housewives.

Down with anti-working class tax increases?tax the bosses? profits and their property.

No to mass unemployment, which will be used to create a reserve army of labour for capital: unemployment pay with no time limits, at the level of the average workers? wage.

For a programme of useful public works, under workers? control and paid for out of the bosses? profits at the usual wage levels for the industry, to repair the environment and infrastructure of the GDR after the years of Stalinist mismanagement.

Long term mass unemployment brings with it demoralisation and political confusion among the unemployed, and as German history up to 1933 shows only too well, prepares the ground for a massive growth of fascism. To avoid this danger, the PDS must call, for and begin to organise, an unemployed workers? union within the ranks of the DGB.1

Hands off socialised property?attack the private monopolies!

Not satisfied with their unlimited control over the means of production, the West German bourgeoisie is now set to plunder the former GDR. Against the robbery by the speculators, and in order to begin anew the fight against capitalist exploitation, we demand:

No privatisations! All industries in the hands of the Treuhand² must be placed under workers? control. Nationalisation of the banks and big financial institutions without compensation. Nationalisation of the major enterprises under workers? control without compensation. No return of confiscated property?of land or industry?no to any compensation payments.

For workers? control over production!

In spite of the Bonn government?s oft-repeated rhetoric about the lack of democracy in the GDR, their 'democracy' ends at the factory gate. Employees are excluded from all real decisions relating to their enterprise. Instead there is the much-vaunted system of 'co-determination'??through which the Factory Councils participate in deciding how many redundancies will be made or how much overtime is to be worked! Against this class collaboration we demand direct workers? control. For independent and sovereign mass meetings of all workers!

Where PDS members have been elected to them they must fight within Factory Councils against co-determination and class collaboration, and for the workers? right to a veto over work times, against redundancies and for control over all matters relating to wages. Against business secrecy and secret deals we demand the opening of the books to inspection by everyone employed in the business.

In every industrial dispute the PDS must fight for the building of factory councils to lead the struggle, with recallable delegates democratically elected by the workforce.

To counter possible provocations by strike-breakers and police attacks on picket-lines or factory occupations we must demand the establishment of workers? defence squads.

The PDS must constitute itself as a separate fraction in the DGB. Against the domination of an arrogant and unaccountable trade union bureaucracy?all too familiar to the workers after forty years of the Stalinist regime?we fight for the building of a militant rank and file movement across the individual DGB unions. No trade union leader should be allowed to earn more than the average skilled worker?s wage. All trade union leaders to be elected directly by the rank and file, all elected officials to be directly recallable. For anti-capitalist policies for the unions. For workers? unity East and West?don?t let the bosses play the workers off against each other.

For democratic class struggle unions!

For democratic united unions: one industry?one union! For a democratic unification of the DGB and the FDGB3 under rank and file control. No to the bureaucratic smashing of the union structures in the former GDR. For the retention of democratically elected trade union and factory committees. For the right to build fractions in the DGB! Against rules excluding radicals and the ?incompatibility clause?.

No to EEC plans for a capitalist ?land reform?!

The big agricultural concerns want to destroy socialised and collectivised farming through a ?reverse land reform?. They want to smash the collective, co-operative and state farms. Accepting competitiveness in the market, i.e. profitability, as the guide-line for agriculture will mean higher food prices and, for the co-operative farmers, unemployment and impoverishment as the result of unrestricted competition against western agri-business. The PDS must defend the real interests of the collective farmers and rural workers.

Stop the smashing of the co-operative farms! No to the re-privatisation of the land! No returning of the old Eastern Junkers? property! For the right of the co-ops to sell their goods direct to the public! For joint commissions of workers and farmers to organise the production and distribution of food. Against the deliberate wrecking tactics being used we must fight for interest free credit from the state for the co-operative and state farms.

For the defence and extension of the working class? social gains!

The family is a base unit of bourgeois society. By making housework primarily a women?s task, thus keeping them isolated in the home, capitalism divides the working class and passes the burden of domestic labour onto women.

This is why capitalism is trying to abolish welfare organisation which, inadequate as it was, did exist in the GDR. It wants to drive women back into the home and deny them the right to self-determination over their own bodies. Against these attacks on fundamental rights we demand:

No closure of child care day centres, or any other public social provisions! Improve and expand these services instead! Abolish paragraph 218 throughout Germany, East and West! Free abortion and free contraceptives on demand. Equal rights to work and equal pay for women. For equal and free access to education for all. Defend the polytechnic schools. Complete separation of church and state within education!

Women are subject to systematic discrimination and oppression in society in general including within the ranks of the labour movement. The PDS must lead a campaign for the establishment of a working class women?s movement which will combat women?s oppression wherever it occurs. This movement must organise to fight sexism in society in general, and particularly within the workers? movement in its struggle against the class society which creates and maintains sexism and women?s oppression.

Under capitalism it is only those who can pay profiteering rents who have the right to accommodation. In what was the GDR, one of the first effects of the market economy will be massive rent increases. To counter this we must prepare for a massive rent boycott?led by neighbourhood committees and with trade union backing. Down with the profiteering landlords! Down with the re-privatisation of housing stock. For a massive public sector programme of house building and home improvement to meet tenants? needs.

Fight fascism wherever it raises its head! Down with all forms of racism!

The fact that the German Nationalist Party (NPD) conference in Erfurt was protected by the police while at the same time a PDS election rally could be banned by the local mayor shows the reality of bourgeois democracy. We must have no illusions that this state and these police will protect us from fascist attacks, or indeed that we can expect them to do anything significant about neo-Nazi activity at all. Quite the contrary.

Fascism aims to destroy all independent organisation of the working class; the twelve year Nazi dictatorship gave us a bloody example of what this means. Fascism means deadly danger for us. Even now, when the fascist groups are still relatively small and isolated, hardly a week goes by without brutal attacks on foreigners, guestworkers or leftists.

No rights, no tolerance and no mercy for fascists! Instead of hoping for discussions or a state ban on the right wing terror gangs, we must fight for the broadest possible united front of all workers' organisations in order to prevent the growth of neo-Nazis like the NDP, FAP, DVU and the REP's, to stop all extreme right mobilisations and to smash their organisations.

For self-defence squads to protect meetings and demonstrations against fascist attacks and to prevent fascist meetings from taking place. The PDS must support and give practical aid to the self-defence of foreigners. Expell all known fascists from the trade unions.

For the active defence of the victims of racism! Against lesbian and gay oppression!

Full rights of citizenship for all who work in Germany! Active and passive voting rights for all foreigners and guest workers resident in Germany. No immigration controls or limits. Rights to autonomy for the Sorben and for Sinti and Gypsies.

No discrimination against lesbians and gay men in the allocation of housing and jobs. Fight all reactionary attacks on sexual minorities. For the building of a lesbian and gay movement within the labour movement to fight for lesbian and gay liberation.

For an anti-capitalist defence of the environment!

If 'really existing socialism' equalled or outstripped capitalism in any way it was in its squandering and dissipation of our natural environment and its resources. Nonetheless, the boundless and brutal destruction of the environment in the capitalist Federal Republic clearly shows that the Greens' ecological reformism can at best remove only the symptoms and the worst abuses, not the source of this destruction. The working class is the main victim of the current alarming deterioration of natural living conditions. It must take the fight against the destruction of the environment for the sake of profit into its own hands.

For independent inspection commissions with labour movement and neighbourhood delegates, to control all dangerous and ecologically damaging production processes, and if necessary stop them. For workers' control of all industries with environmentally damaging waste products. For strikes and direct action to impose guaranteed safety standards, as established by workers' inspection commissions. Close all acutely dangerous factories and power stations with no loss of employment or earnings for the workforce. For a programme of public works to protect all aspects of the environment, paid for from the bosses' profits and under workers' control.

For a truly democratic centralist party!

The SED was an appalling caricature of the genuine democratic centralism which Lenin's party was based upon. All internal dissent was met with administrative/police suppression, whilst free discussion and political debate was replaced by a personality cult, manipulation and the doctrine of the party leadership's infallibility.

In abandoning the Stalinist corruption of democratic centralism the PDS could now move to the opposite extreme. With

the confusion of different grassroots organisations existing inside the PDS some form of centralism is needed to regularise internal communication between party members, to ensure the democratic decisions of the majority are carried out and, not least, to hold the party leadership to account. Real democratic centralism involves full and free internal discussion combined with the strictest unity in action outside the party once the decision has been made.

We demand of the PDS:

No exclusions and no expulsions of minority socialist currents, and no ban on radical fractions, tendencies and platforms. Down with the PDS's 'radical clause'. For the right of all party members to build their own platforms. For party papers to give free access for oppositional points of view. The party press should be open to all its members. For real democratic discussion in the PDS an internal bulletin representing a full range of different opinions is indispensable. The PDS MPs must be accountable to the party at all levels. No party official and no MP should earn more than the average wage of a skilled worker. For direct control over all party property by the members.

For the right of all the socially oppressed (women, ethnic minorities and immigrants, lesbians and gays, etc) to organise caucuses at any time and at all levels within the party.

The party must re-organise itself in industry and must win the trust of the workers through a democratic discussion, through decisive politics and through the defence of the workers' interests in daily struggle.

For workers' democracy, not the democracy of the Bundesbank!

The 'peaceful revolution' of last autumn enabled the workers of the GDR to get new democratic freedoms. After forty years of Stalinist dictatorship and restraint the right to build independent workers' organisations, to express one's opinion freely, and to be able to strike undoubtedly constituted definite gains. But instead of going forward to the establishment of real workers' democracy at state level, instead of establishing the rule of workers' councils, based on democratically elected and accountable workers' delegates, subject to recall at any time, instead of completing the political revolution by overthrowing the remnants of bureaucratic rule, the mass movement allowed power to pass into the hands of West German capital. Indeed, by democratically electing the 'alliance' government of De Maziere it legitimised the direct agents of the bosses' anschluss.

The undemocratic form of the GDR's anschluss, as dictated by Bonn, has given us a taste of just how 'democratic' even the most democratic form of bourgeois rule is, when economic interests are at stake. We can now vote for a new federal government every couple of years, but have no real say in any political decisions between those elections. Our only choice is to withdraw electoral support from parties all of which are quite content to play out the comic charade of 'peoples' representation' in their parliamentary talking shop. Meanwhile real power lies with the heads of the major concerns: the banks, army chiefs, police and intelligence agencies, the unelected judges and bureaucratic hierarchy of the civil service. But that is the real essence of bourgeois democracy. We must expose this hidden dictatorship of the bourgeoisie by consistently fighting the thousands of undemocratic restrictions of bourgeois law which seek to restrain and prevent workers' resistance.

Down with the 5% electoral clause. No restrictions on election rights. Down with all bans on labour movement meetings and demonstrations. All bans on PDS meetings (such as in Arnstadt) must be met with party mobilisations. Organise a party self-defence group against attacks (as in Frankfurt/Oder) and right wing provocations.

Open all Stasi and other security service files to workers' inspection! Dissolve all secret services! Down with the 'Berufsverbot'! Down with paragraph 129a! No to all legal restrictions on the right to strike! Smash all anti-union laws! No confiscation of PDS and FDGB property by the bourgeois state!

Our representatives in parliament must speak for the workers and oppressed. They must use parliament as a tribune of the class struggle, voting against every reactionary bill and laying bare the diplomatic horse trading and manoeuvres that characterise bourgeois parliamentarism.

State and revolution

In the fight for the socialist transformation of society the capitalists will never give up their power willingly. Like every other ruling class in the world, the German bourgeoisie has clearly shown that it will use its state power against our movement without reference to the hallowed principles of the 'democratic' constitution. There is no peaceful, parliamentary road to socialism?remember Chile!

As Rosa Luxemburg has already shown us, if we are to take the road of militant struggle against the capitalists and their state then we must recognise the strategic necessity to violently smash the ruling class? repressive apparatus. We must aim for the dissolution of the BND, the abolition of the army and the police and its replacement with armed organisations of the entire working class. It is clear that this can only happen in a situation of heightened class struggle, in a pre-revolutionary situation. But we must prepare the way by agitating for democratic soldiers? councils in the army, for soldiers? unions within the DGB. In every class battle, in strikes and occupations, we can begin the fight for a real workers? militia by fighting to build workers? and pickets? self-defence squads.

The government that we aim to build must stand in the tradition of the Spartacus League of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, and the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trotsky?not in the tradition of Noske and Ebert or of Grotewohl and Pieck! It must not be a party relying on a formal parliamentary majority while in reality being at the beck and call of the capitalists. Even less can it succeed in winning power through a putsch supported by the tanks of an occupying power. The only way it can win and implement its power is through the actions of the majority of the working population organised in democratic workers? councils.

We must inscribe on our banner the strategic goal: for a democratic workers? council republic in Germany and for the Socialist United States of Europe!

For genuine internationalism!

The old SED practiced an obscene caricature of internationalism. It slavishly followed the foreign policy interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy. Under Stalin, who stifled the revolutionary internationalism of the Comintern, eventually dissolving it as a concession to the western allies in 1943, 'peaceful co-existence' with imperialism had become the dominant theme of Soviet foreign policy. This meant abandoning the struggle for the establishment of socialism on a world scale. We are experiencing the catastrophic consequences of this policy today, as the USSR itself faces collapse.

The Stalinist parties? abandonment of the strategy of permanent revolution in imperialism?s 'third world' semi-colonies meant forcibly limiting workers? and the peasants? struggles to a 'democratic stage'. They wanted to build strategic alliances with nationalist, 'progressive' sections of the domestic bourgeoisie. This left the workers? movement disarmed and helpless as the national bourgeoisie first secured their own power, and then turned with savage violence against their former alliance partners. The bloody massacres and defeats from Indonesia to Chile, from Iran to Nicaragua are striking evidence of this suicidal policy?s criminal consequences. Even now the Stalinist 'realists' in South Africa are trying to limit the revolutionary struggle of the black workers to a negotiated solution with the apartheid regime?laying the basis for a new and cruel defeat.

In order to 'preserve socialism' the Stalinist bureaucracy has repeatedly suppressed workers? uprisings against their rule in the degenerate workers? states, one of the most recent examples being the Tiananmen Square massacre. But at the same time these heroes of 'really existing socialism' make no secret of their preparedness to deliver up the state and the economy to the capitalists to escape from the dead end which their reactionary and utopian 'socialism in one country' has led them to.

The ruling bureaucracy is concerned, not with defending workers? interests, but with preserving its privileges at any price. Gorbachev has sold the GDR for promises of credit and investment from German capital. He is even prepared for the USSR to intervene in the Gulf alongside NATO, to show its loyalty to its newly found imperialist 'friends'.

We must return to the internationalism of the revolutionary Communist International of Lenin and Trotsky. In the

newly united Germany, the future leading imperialist power in Europe, we must resist every effort imperialism makes to extend its domination over Eastern Europe once again, and in so doing erect a new imperialist world order.

Not a penny, not a person for the bourgeois army! In the best tradition of Liebknecht and Luxemburg, the PDS must stand against every military budget, and every intervention of German troops outside Germany.

We must defend semi-colonial countries like Iraq against direct military aggression from the imperialist states. Despite their often reactionary and brutal dictatorships countries such as this must be defended against every imperialist intervention, even when it takes place in the name of 'democracy'. Every defeat for imperialism weakens the world system of plunder and enforced dependence in general, and makes the overthrow of dictatorships at home easier. National liberation movements like the PLO, ANC, FSLN and the Kurdish resistance demand our unconditional support in their struggle against imperialism.

Germany?get out of NATO! No more foreign troops in Germany?for the immediate withdrawal of all NATO troops and all missile bases from Germany! For a mass campaign, inside and outside the Bundeswehr, against NATO and in particular against any participation in the intervention in the Gulf! Down with the economic blockade of Iraq!

We are for the greatest possible support for all revolutionary struggles and workers' movements against Stalinist oppression in the degenerate workers' states. For free trade unions and independent working class organisations. For the right of secession from the USSR for all nationalities and republics, if the majority of the population wish it. Only the political revolution, the overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy and its replacement by democratic workers' councils, can really defend the workers' existing gains and prevent capitalist restoration. For the defence of the USSR, China, the East European states, Cuba and Indo-china against all internal or external restoration of capitalism.

The Socialist International has stood on the side of capital since 1914. In time of war its parties have again and again sent the workers off to imperialist carnage. In government, in times of peace, they have not shrunk from attacking workers' living standards and social gains in the interests of the bourgeoisie. Despite much talk about a 'democratic solution of the north-south conflict' social-democracy unequivocally supports the imperialist world order, which condemns four-fifths of humanity to hunger, poverty and barbaric oppression. It plays a pioneering role in the re-introduction of capitalism in the countries of 'really existing socialism' in the name of bourgeois democracy and the 'social market economy'.

By the 1930s the Communist International had been turned into an agency of the Soviet bureaucracy by the Stalinists, and it was finally destroyed politically and organisationally in its entirety.

Without an international party which can develop a strategy for the fight against capitalism using the lessons of the struggles of the workers and oppressed around the world, without an organisation which consciously and actively unites and leads those different struggles, international solidarity will be weak and internationalism will remain an empty phrase. With good reason Marx and Engels, Luxemburg, Lenin and Trotsky made great efforts to build an international party.

To all comrades in the PDS wanting to fight for the rebirth of the real tradition of revolutionary Marxism; to all those who want to break completely with Stalinism and launch a consistent struggle against all social democratic currents within the party; to all those who wish to build a new revolutionary workers' party in Germany and a new revolutionary communist International, we submit this proposal for the construction of a Trotskyist Platform in the PDS as a contribution to the renewal process in the party.

Notes

Translated from Arbeitermacht 10, 20.10.90

1. The FRG's national trade union federation

2. The state capitalist trust holding all nationalised property in the former GDR

3. The former GDR national trade union federation

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