

# ICWA

## LETTERS

Since 1925 the Institute of Current World Affairs (the Crane-Rogers Foundation) has provided long-term fellowships to enable outstanding young professionals to live outside the United States and write about international areas and issues. An exempt operating foundation endowed by the late Charles R. Crane, the Institute is also supported by contributions from like-minded individuals and foundations.

### TRUSTEES

Bryn Barnard  
Joseph Battat  
Mary Lynne Bird  
Steven Butler  
Sharon F. Doorasamy  
William F. Foote  
Peter Geithner  
Gary Hartshorn  
Kitty Hempstone  
Katherine Roth Kono  
Cheng Li  
Peter Bird Martin  
Dasa Obereigner  
Chandler Rosenberger  
Edmund Sutton

### HONORARY TRUSTEES

David Elliot  
David Hapgood  
Pat M. Holt  
Edwin S. Munger  
Richard H. Nolte  
Albert Ravenholt  
Phillips Talbot

**Institute of Current World Affairs**  
The Crane-Rogers Foundation  
Four West Wheelock Street  
Hanover, New Hampshire 03755 U.S.A.

JW-2  
GERMANY

*Jill Winder is a Donors' Fellow of the Institute studying post-reunification Germany through the work and attitudes of its artists.*

## “*Wir sind das Volk*”: Monday Demonstrations 1989 and Today

By Jill Winder

SEPTEMBER 19, 2004

BERLIN—On September 4, 1989 approximately 1,000 people gathered around Saint Nicholas's Church in Leipzig to demand human rights and more democratic freedoms, calling for a thorough reform of the German Democratic Republic (GDR—former East Germany). According to the Goethe Institute, the date is considered to be the first of the so-called *Montagsdemonstrationen*, or Monday Demonstrations, a specifically “eastern” form of protest, which are credited with catalyzing the dissolution of the East German regime later that same year. Churches across East Germany were the centers of peaceful protest, and citizens from across the GDR gathered after work on Monday evenings to attend demonstrations often clandestinely organized through local religious institutions. Protesters carried candles and signs that read “*Wir sind das Volk*” (We are the people), and demanded a reform of the socialist system in East Germany, using phrases such as “Socialism with a human face.” Many hoped for the development of a “third way” system of government that would retain socialist and democratic principles without completely giving over to the linkage of liberal democracy and capitalism found in most countries of Western Europe (including West Germany).

At the height of the demonstrations, October 9, 1989, nearly 100,000 people marched through the city center of Leipzig calling for more non-violent demonstrations and political reforms. Though many anticipated violent clashes with the 8,000 soldiers and armed policemen who were present to quell the demonstration—the brutal crackdown in Tiananmen Square in China only months before added to these fears—such confrontations were relatively minor. In the following weeks, protests spread across the entire GDR, particularly in cities such as Dresden, Magdeburg and Halle. Estimates of weekly participation in the demonstrations



*Monday Demonstration in Leipzig, October 9, 1989, courtesy: [www.tourjour.nl](http://www.tourjour.nl)*

range from 100,000 to 150,000 East German citizens.

During the 15 years that have passed between autumn 1989 and today, Germany has been engaged in the complex process of the unification of West and East. The task of integrating a highly developed Western democratic state with the strongest economy in Europe and a member state of the Communist bloc has been enormously expensive, politically sensitive and socially divisive. In 1989, Chancellor Helmut Kohl proclaimed that the new German states in the east would be turned into *blühende Landschaften* (blooming landscapes) and that no one would be worse off after reunification. Today, unemployment in the eastern regions of the country hovers at 20 percent, double that of the western German regions, and the figure is even higher in villages and rural areas, and among citizens between 18 and 29. In her essay, "Blooming Landscapes? Taking Stock of German Reunification after 14 Years," economist Louise Tamaschke notes that according to a 2004 government survey, the eastern German economy is growing at half the rate of the West's and its productivity levels are at two thirds the rate of the West. This is in stark contrast to the early 1990s when growth rates in the East were at about 8 percent and levels of unemployment, productivity, innovation and investment were all showing movement in favorable directions. There is widespread disillusionment



Monday Demonstration, September 8, 2004 in Magdeburg;  
photo: Der Spiegel

among citizens of eastern Germany that the promises of reunification remain largely unfulfilled, and that on political, economic, and social levels they are treated as second-class citizens in the country.

\* \* \*

Every Monday since August 2, 2004, a new wave of Monday Demonstrations has swept through Germany, this time to protest a set of measures known as Hartz IV (named after Peter Hartz, the head of personnel at Volkswagen, chairman of the state commission that drafted them), Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and his government's planned reforms of the country's generous system of welfare and unemployment benefits, which will particularly affect people who have been unemployed over a year. These reforms are part of an overall reform package called "Agenda 2010," aimed at reinvigorating the economy and dismantling the core of Germany's welfare state by the year 2010. The protests began in the eastern city of Magdeburg and quickly spread to other cities in the region such as Halle, Acherleben, Dessau and Leipzig. By the end of August, regular protests were also taking place in Berlin and western cities such as Hamburg, Munich, Kassel, Düsseldorf, Saarbrücken and other towns in the Ruhr region.

The anti-globalization group Attac, which is monitoring the protests, believes demonstrations have occurred in 140 cities across the country. When thousands protested in front of Saint Nicholas's Church in Leipzig on August 16<sup>th</sup>, many explicitly invoked their participation in the Monday Demonstrations of 1989, carrying banners with statements such as: "We have brought down the government before!" and "1989-2004: We're back!" "*Wir sind das Volk!*" reappeared alongside demands for Chancellor Schröder's resignation and the withdrawal of the Hartz IV reform proposal. The demonstrators represent a broad demographic crosscut, ranging from pensioners to young families to leftist, university-age anti-globalization activists. Young neo-Nazis have also been present at demonstrations, but have been shunned by the majority of protesters. For many older participants, these are the first demonstrations they have attended since late 1989, and the anti-reform demonstrations are by far the largest in Germany since the fall of the GDR.

At the Leipzig demonstration, Reinhard Sauper, a 50-year-old mechanic who has been unemployed for four years, told a reporter, "We have been thoroughly betrayed. Helmut Kohl promised us 'flourishing landscapes' and look what happened. Now Schröder comes along and tells us that cuts are necessary in order to create new jobs. This is complete nonsense. It has been a downhill development all along." Sauper and others were incensed last month when the government sent out a 16-page questionnaire to all those who have been unemployed for more than a year requesting extensive financial and personal data, as well as a record of attempts to find employment. Sauper called the questionnaire "scan-



ent also demanded a halt to the demonstrations, claiming that to call the present protests “Monday Demonstrations” is an embarrassment to the legacy of the revolution of 1989 and “an insult to the civic courage shown by many East Germans.” Many protesters who were involved in the 1989 demonstrations disagree, and go so far as to say that the current government is cynically trying to dismiss this mass movement by calling into question the protesters’ aims and moral right to dissent.

Many of the protesters see the current wave of Monday Demonstrations as an ethically appropriate and direct extension of those of 1989. They claim that current conditions in eastern Germany are a result of the missed opportunities and failures of reunification. Winifried Helbig, a veteran of the 1989 protests, commented: “The people went out into the streets in 1989 because they could see no future for themselves, and this is the case for many people today as well. The Monday Demonstrations are a brand name, one that reminds us of past victories and current disappointments.”

Attac, the anti-globalization group comprised of mainly young students, responded to criticisms by saying, “We want to remember 1989, when the people said, ‘that’s enough.’” Christian Führer, a Saint Nicholas’s pastor at who was involved in organizing the Leipzig protests in 1989, is playing a role in the latest round of Monday Demonstrations by once again opening the Church to protesters as a center for organization and peaceful protest. He countered claims that the demonstrators were putting Schröder’s government on a par with the communist East-German regime with, “You can’t say, ‘We’re happy that you marched against the communists, but you should shut up now.’ That’s totally unacceptable.” In an interview with Stephan Löwenstein in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Führer was asked if he felt that the current demonstrations cheapen the tradition of the 1989 protests. “There is really only one thing that would really damage and debase the Monday Dem-

dalous” and said, “these are impertinent questions, and their only aim is to reduce any claims as much as possible.” Another demonstrator, Mona Ragy, explained that she had participated in the 1989 demonstrations and that although basic democratic rights had been achieved by those protests, they need to be defended and preserved today. Ragy claimed that Schröder has only perpetuated and intensified the policies of social injustice initiated by then-Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the early 1990s. She called for both the withdrawal of Hartz IV and the resignation of Gerhard Schröder.

Demonstrators were also furious about the statement made by Joachim Gauch, a government official who headed the department charged to secure and analyze the files of the East German secret police, the Stasi, after German reunification. Gauch claimed that the Monday demonstrators had no right to place themselves in the tradition of those demonstrators 15 years ago, when the great aims of the protests were democracy and freedom, not “egotistical concerns of one’s individual survival.” The government’s deputy spokesmen, Hans Langguth, denounced the Monday Demonstrations as a “higher level of hysteria” and accused the media of spreading disinformation by focusing on the sacrifices instead of the benefits of the Hartz IV reforms.



*Police line up in front of protesters gathered at the Rotes Rathaus (Red Town Hall) in downtown Berlin, September 13, 2004.*



*View of the Monday Demonstration in Berlin, September 13, 2004*



onstrations, Führer said "If violence were used."

I attended the protest in Berlin on September 13, which began on Alexanderplatz, once the central shopping area of East Berlin. The demonstration was smaller than it had been on previous Mondays, but there were still a few thousand people carrying banners and homemade signs with phrases such as "Weg mit Hartz IV" (Away with Hartz IV) and "Neue Politik braucht das Land!" (This country needs new politics). I was surprised by the diversity of the crowd, in particular the strange feeling that it was a protest attended by aging parents and their rowdy teens, the two most prevalent age groups at the demonstrations. From a makeshift podium, people who were involved in the 1989 protests in Dresden and Leipzig expressed their disappointment not only with the Hartz IV reforms, but also with the entire process of reunification. They are particularly enraged by the way people suffering from long-term unemployment are generally perceived to be uneducated, lazy and abusive of the generous system.

One woman, who has a doctorate in psychology from an East German university and has been unemployed for

three years, told me that the social stigma she faces both as an unemployed woman and a former GDR citizen has been far more demeaning than the conditions of life she experienced in East Germany. This sentiment, while unpopular among many protesters, is by no means unusual. Many pensioners, in particular, say that the basic conditions of life—a steady job, reasonable pay, retirement benefits, health care and a place to live, all of which were more or less guaranteed in East Germany—are now less and less attainable for the average person.

Attac has also been a strong and regular presence at the Monday Demonstrations. They claim that the Hartz IV reforms are simply one part of a growing neo-liberal trend worldwide that promotes the interests of global capitalism while chipping away at democracy. At the demonstration I attended, members carried a banner that read "Neoliberal ist asozial" (Neo-liberalism is anti-social). Also present were a few gray-haired men carrying old East-German Communist-Party flags.

One lone student holding a GDR flag stood next to a banner made by the Freie Deutsche Jugend, or FDJ (Free German Youth), a Communist youth organization still active, as they put it, after "the annexation of the GDR in 1990." Their banner read: "Nazis, Hartz und Bundeswehr" (Nazis, Hartz, and the German Army). I spoke

to the young man holding the GDR flag and learned that he is a philosophy student at the University of Leipzig. At 23, he did not see his fate as being any different from that of his parents, a teacher and an engineer who have both been chronically unemployed since the mid-1990s. While he agrees that a return to GDR-style government would not solve all problems, he is convinced that the only way he can secure a future of gainful employment



*Banner of the Free German Youth, Berlin, September 13, 2004*



Members of anti-globalization group Attac at the Monday Demonstration, Berlin, September 13, 2004

and relative security is to fight for a reinvigoration of the Communist tradition.

The protests across Germany have brought together unlikely factions, creating unusual alliances and paradoxical mixtures. For example, at the demonstration in Berlin, the PDS (Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus), the reformed Communist party, had a strong presence, as has been the case from the start of the Monday Demonstrations. The success of the demonstrations has dramatically increased support for the reformed Communist party, leading to fears that it will capitalize on the debate about Hartz IV in key elections in the states of Saarland, Brandenburg and Saxony this month. The PDS is now the second-strongest party in the most economically depressed eastern German states.

Although PDS leader Gregor Gysi says his party is simply spelling out the impacts of the reform policy for the people, leaders of Schröder's SPD Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) have accused the former Communists, and particularly Gysi, of irresponsibly fueling resentment. The SPD's Uwe Benneter told *Der Spiegel* last week, "The PDS is exploiting the reforms for electioneering purposes in a disgustingly populist manner. We must strengthen our campaign to debunk those who are intent only on stoking anger without presenting alternative solutions of their own."

Another surprising force at the Monday Demonstrations has been Oskar Lafontaine. Lafontaine, former party chairman of the SPD and former Minister of Finance, is

a flamboyant politician known as the "Napoleon from Saarland." His political career has been marred by both petty scandals and major defeats, most notably his ill-fated campaign to depose Chancellor Helmut Kohl in the 1990 elections, when Lafontaine ran on a platform that opposed unification. He has been largely absent from the political scene since he unexpectedly resigned his post as Finance Minister in 1999, claiming that Schröder and the SPD had betrayed their social democratic principles.

Lafontaine, who is closely allied with the anti-globalization movement, was the main speaker at a number of last month's Monday Demonstrations in Leipzig, during which he attacked the Hartz IV reforms, claiming that they cut benefits for the poor while decreasing taxes for the wealthy. In an interview in *Der Spiegel* on August 9, Lafontaine referred to the demonstrations, saying, "The question is clear: Do we want to continue working with these politicians, whose policies have had catastrophic results? We have the highest unemployment rates since the war, the highest deficit... We live in a democracy, and the people's will cannot be ignored." When asked if he would consider playing a key role in developing a new left-wing party (which he is widely considered to be planning to do), Lafontaine responded, "We are not yet that far. But my announcement is clear: I am no longer in support of Schröder and I will fight for a real, new orientation for the SPD. When this is not possible, I will support a new political alternative. In what way and to what extent I would be involved in such a project, I will decide when the time comes."

\* \* \*

Debate over Hartz IV has been the catalyst for the revival of the Monday Demonstrations, but the protests against the reforms are a symptom and not the cause of widespread disillusionment and disappointment felt in the East about the results of reunification. Events in recent weeks have exposed just how divided Germany re-



PDS supporters gather at the Monday Demonstration in Berlin, September 13, 2004

mains in many respects. In an interview in mid-September, President Horst Köhler shocked many citizens and politicians by publicly questioning whether the differences in living standards and unemployment rates in eastern and western Germany could ever be equalized, saying that the east-west gap was comparable to the global north-south divide. Though politicians from eastern Germany denounced Köhler's comments, many economic experts agreed with him. Few politicians have dared to make such a blunt statement for fear of alienating eastern voters. But it is clear that eastern citizens feel particularly targeted by the latest reforms.

Recent opinion polls indicate a significant gap in opinion between East and West Germans on the subject of Hartz IV. The Election Research Group in Mannheim released a poll that shows 44 percent of West Germans saying that the government's reforms are wrong, compared with 58 percent in the east.

Many commentators believe that this difference is a reflection not only of the economic situation, but also of a different conception of politics in East and West. Bernhard Wessels, a political scientist at the Free University in Berlin commented, "People in the east are less satisfied with democracy than in the west. Even in the west there is a strong affinity with the social welfare states, but in the east there is a greater desire for a kind of socialist democracy." Indeed, another poll released by the Election Research Group on September 16 found that 75 percent of East German respondents said that socialism was a good idea, compared with just over half of Westeners polled, numbers that reflect many Germans' fundamental skepticism of market economics and a tendency to rely on state regulation in the social as well as economic sphere.

The main aim of "Agenda 2010" is to reinvigorate the weakened German economy, which has been immensely burdened by the costs of reunification. According to World Bank statistics, the East German economy was the tenth largest in the world in 1989, and by far the most prosperous member state of the former Soviet bloc. After 1989, industrial production in the East came to an almost complete halt. The breakdown of East-German economic structures, competition with the west, low technical standards of production, etc., were all significant hurdles to be overcome—many economic and business networks had to be completely rebuilt. According to the Ministry of Finance, West German taxpayers have transferred nearly 90 billion Euros (over US\$100 billion) a year to help rebuild the East, and between 1990 and 2002 the government spent more than 1.25 trillion Euro (\$1.45 trillion) on a region with a population of 15.1 million. (The population of reunified Germany in 1989 comprised 80 percent West Germans and 20 percent East Germans.)

Klaus von Dohnanyi, head of a government-appointed commission on East Germany, echoed the sentiments of many Germans recently when he commented,

"West Germans are tired of paying these massive amounts of money, yet they are committed to it. It has been agreed to allocate an additional 150 billion Euro (\$183 billion) until 2019 in addition to the annual pension, social insurance and unemployment benefits that will continue."

The 20-percent unemployment rate in the eastern regions is only one statistic pointing to the disparity of living conditions in the two parts of Germany. According to a 2004 Federal Ministry of Finance report, the average gross monthly income in the West German states is 2,600 Euro (\$3,172), while in the east it is 1,800 Euro (\$2,196). In addition, the National Statistical Bureau reported that the percentage of those living below the poverty line (half the average income), always well below ten percent before 2001, rose more than 2 percent in 2002 to 11 percent, and it now fluctuates between 11 and 13 percent. Hanna Haupt from the Institute for Social Science Studies in Berlin predicts that this trend will continue: "This will become a galloping process; during the coming ten years the poverty rate in the East will grow rapidly."

Another indicator of decline in the eastern German states is the decrease in the populations of major cities in the East such as Leipzig and Halle, documented in a recent exhibition at Kunst Werke in Berlin called "Shrinking Cities." In many eastern cities, hundreds of thousands of apartments and industrial buildings stand vacant, and many young professionals go west to Berlin, Cologne, Hamburg or Frankfurt in search of higher-paying jobs. In his recent book *Luxus der Leere* (The Luxury of Emptiness), Wolfgang Kil, an architectural historian, wrote that over one million residential apartments are vacant in Berlin alone.

An additional threat to reviving the economy and to the development of industry in the East has been posed by the eastward expansion of the European Union that took place on May 1, 2004. Economists are skeptical that small or mid-sized Western German companies will invest in eastern Germany, lured instead by lower labor and production costs to neighboring Central and East-European countries. A survey by the DIHK, an industrial and trade association, showed that 43 percent of small or mid-sized companies indicated an interest in the new EU member states, not only because of lower labor costs, but also due to the "over-regulated German labor market."

Despite widespread protests and potentially disastrous political costs of the reform proposals for the ruling SPD-Green ("Red-Green") coalition in September's regional elections, Schröder stood by the reforms. Speaking in the German Parliament on September 8, he insisted that the tax reforms provide relief to all income brackets, that pensions will be guaranteed and that health care reforms will keep the cost of medical care affordable for everyone. "The merging of unemployment assistance and welfare assistance (Hartz IV) for the purpose of fighting long-term unemployment is

a necessary and fair measure," Schröder said.

What do the Hartz IV reforms actually propose? They are particularly aimed at the so-called "long-term unemployed," a term that refers to people who have been out of work for over one year. Meant to take effect in January 2005, the reforms would slash unemployment benefits (which can be as high as 60 percent of a recipient's original salary) to the level of subsistence welfare payments. They also would decrease the health-care benefits covered by the state. The Federal Employment Agency estimates that roughly 2.2 million people will be affected by the reforms.

On the German government's official website, an intricate table lists an example of benefits and how they would affect recipients. Under Hartz IV, basic payments would be reduced to 345 Euros (\$420) per month plus roughly 300 Euros (\$366) in additional benefits for rent and utilities, equaling 786 Euros (\$959). In the east, payments would total closer to 700 Euros (\$854). The payments are somewhat lower for an unemployed person in eastern Germany, but the government says that the disparity reflects lower living costs in the eastern regions. Opponents of the reforms also point to a provision that would require those on long-term unemployment benefits to dip into personal savings and life insurance policies to cover basic costs.

"[The demonstrations are] a very stark reminder of how difficult these reforms are," said Holger Schmieding, an economist at the Bank of America in London. "They are not going to yield any significant short-term benefits. This is basically a cut, which will hurt a good two million people." In the short run, many economists agree that cutting unemployment benefits will not in itself create more jobs. There is no question that statistically the majority of the people who will be affected by the Hartz IV measures are living in the eastern states of Germany (although official figures state that 1 million in the eastern states and 1.2 million in the western states will be hit by cuts, it must be remembered that the population in the West is significantly greater than in the East). The unemployment rate in the former East German states is roughly 20 percent, and 39 percent of those people — about 1.7 million individuals — have been unemployed for over a year. This reflects the fact that much of the industrial infrastructure of eastern Germany has been dismantled or abandoned since reunification, leaving 19 percent of the population chronically unemployed.

During the month of September, an additional drama related to protests against Hartz IV played out in regional elections were held in the eastern German states of Saarland, Brandenburg and Saxony. At the polls, many voters were expected to cast their ballots in favor of the PDS (reformed Communists) or far-right parties such as the National Democratic Party to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with Schröder and the SPD-Green government. Many Germans are concerned with the rising popu-

larity of both the PDS and more extreme right-wing parties in the East, and political scientist Michael Edinger at Jena University says that easterners' experiences of Communist Party rule make them particularly susceptible to extreme voting patterns. "There is a danger of many Eastern Germans voting for extremist parties, and this is sustained by the fact that Eastern Germans have never had strong party affiliations," he said. "We're coming to realize that such loose political ties could be the future of politics in all of Germany, raising the specter of large numbers of protest voters quite ready to support extremist parties at the ballot box."

Indeed, in September 5 elections in Saarland (once governed by Oskar Lafontaine), the conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) retained their power in the state while the SPD's share of votes fell dramatically—14 percentage points, from 44.5 percent to 30.8 percent. This was the lowest return for the SPD in 45 years. Particularly concerning was the success of the far-right National Democratic Party, which the government compared to the Nazis and attempted to ban last year, claiming that the party supports skinhead gangs and incites hate crimes. Running on an anti-immigrant platform that opposed welfare reforms, National Democrats garnered nearly 4 percent of the votes. This was not enough to breach the five-percent threshold required to enter the Parliament, but a strong enough showing to make many Germans nervous that such a vote may echo changes to come. Analysis by ZDF television indicated that much of the support for extremist parties came from the unemployed and younger voters.

Just prior to elections in Brandenburg and Saxony on September 19, 2004, old political rivals Gerhard Schröder and Helmut Kohl made statements expressing concern about growing support for right-wing parties. During the campaign, Schröder said, "Everything associated with the right-wing swamp hurts us, hurts Germany and hurts us in the eyes of foreign investors." CDU party-member and former Chancellor Kohl went a step further, commenting, "These people—and I don't draw any distinction between far left and far right—will never offer any sort of future." Georg Milbradt, the CDU party leader in Saxony, fueled resentment by telling the Bonn newspaper *General Anzeiger* that increased support of right-wing parties was a reflection of eastern Germans' insecurities. "I don't think that most of the voters are right-wing radicals, nationalists, or xenophobes. Rather, they see the election as an expression of protest."

Even without the controversial Hartz IV reform package, Schröder's party had a difficult battle to wage in Brandenburg (the state north of Berlin), where polls indicated that the PDS could emerge as the leading party. In the eastern state of Saxony, a Christian Democratic stronghold, the CDU was campaigning hard to maintain their lead, and two far-right parties hoped to break the 5 percent threshold to earn their share of power in the state parliament. Although the election results did not give any

fringe parties seats in Parliament, and left both regional governments intact, the numbers indicated worrying trends nevertheless.

In Brandenburg, the PDS reaffirmed its role as the party of choice for dissatisfied easterners, taking 27.8 percent (a 4 percent increase over the 1999 elections), the party's best showing in the state to date. The PDS managed to replace the opposition Christian Democrats as the second-largest party in Brandenburg, after the SPD majority. The PDS also achieved slight gains in Saxony, with just over 20 percent of the vote. Responding to the far-right National Democratic Party's 9.3 percent take in Saxony, Franz Müntefering, head of the SPD, called the results a "disaster." This comment was particularly apt in light of the fact that the SPD's showing was the worst ever in a state election, tallying in at a mere 9.8 percent. Political analysts indicate that the trends in Saxony are of particular concern because it puts a party suspected of having links to neo-Nazi youth gangs on a par with the Social Democrats.

The National Democratic Party (NDP) is extremely well organized, particularly in rural areas where the economic situation provides a prime breeding ground for resentment and anger against foreigners. The party calls for Germany to close its borders and send foreign workers home. The party has been especially successful in gaining support from young, unemployed eastern Germans who are attracted to its anti-immigrant platform.

The National Democrats were thrilled with the results of their populist campaign focused against Hartz IV. During a press conference following the elections, Holger Apfel, the party leader in Saxony proclaimed, "This is a huge victory for the German people... It is a great day for Germans who still want to be German," prompting many candidates from other parties to walk out in protest. On the day of the elections, Paul Spiegel, head of Germany's Central Council of Jews, said that "a party that makes anti-Semitic and xenophobic propaganda does not belong in any parliament," and compared the risks of the election to Hitler's rise to power, saying "Memories of the end of the Weimar Republic are awakened."

The day after the elections, PDS party leader Petra Pau told the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* that the SPD and CDU should feel responsible for the success of the extreme-right parties in the elections. She continued, "Anyone who compares the PDS with these parties will only increase the power of the extremists." Ludwig Georg Braun, president of the DIHK (*Deutschen Industrie- und Handelskammertags*), an industrial and trade organization, expressed concerns about the impact of the extreme-right parties' success in Saxony and its implications for foreign investment. He told the *Berliner Zeitung*, "The radicals have only one goal: that is to profit from people's uncertainty." Braun continued, "Whoever gives the extremists a voice through their vote damages their reputation and sets back the economic development of their country by years." Braun also feared that the NPD's rise in Saxony could deter investors from Saxony (the most prosperous eastern state), which views itself as the "Silicon Valley" of Germany and is the home to much of the automobile industry in the region.

Commentary in *Der Spiegel* on September 20, the day after the election, was far harsher, proclaiming a "counterrevolution in the East." Stefan Berg provided the following analysis: "The conclusion is bitter. Measured against the spirit of autumn 1989, these election results can be called a counterrevolution. Then, when one counts those who did not vote and the supporters from the two right extreme parties and the PDS together, these people have the majority in Brandenburg and Saxony. Today they have voted against democracy, and have separated themselves from values of autumn 1989. This is the darkest side of these election results." □

Institute Fellows are chosen on the basis of character, previous experience and promise. They are young professionals funded to spend a minimum of two years carrying out self-designed programs of study and writing outside the United States. The Fellows are required to report their findings and experiences from the field once a month. They can write on any subject, as formally or informally as they wish. The result is a unique form of reporting, analysis and periodic assessment of international events and issues.

**Author:** Winder, Jill  
**Title:** ICWA Letters (Europe/Russia)  
**ISSN:** 1083-4273  
**Imprint:** Institute of Current World Affairs, Hanover, NH  
**Material Type:** Serial  
**Language:** English  
**Frequency:** Monthly  
**Other Regions:** South Asia; East Asia, The Americas; Mideast/North Africa; Sub-Saharan Africa

ICWA Letters (ISSN 1083-4273) are published by the Institute of Current World Affairs Inc., a 501(c)(3) exempt operating foundation incorporated in New York State with offices located at 4 West Wheelock Street, Hanover, NH 03755. The letters are provided free of charge to members of ICWA and are available to libraries and professional researchers by subscription.

Phone: (603) 643-5548  
Fax: (603) 643-9599  
E-Mail: [icwa@valley.net](mailto:icwa@valley.net)  
Web address: [www.icwa.org](http://www.icwa.org)

Executive Director:  
Peter Bird Martin  
Program Administrator:  
Brent Jacobson  
Publications Design & Management:  
Ellen Kozak

©2004 Institute of Current World Affairs, The Crane-Rogers Foundation.

The information contained in this publication may not be reproduced without the writer's permission.