

FRONT PAGES FROM HISTORY

BY JOSEF BOSCH. www.josefbosch.net

The Times, London – Saturday, November 11 1989

Eastern Europe was all about pretending. Pretending it had solid political unity. Pretending that everybody was happy. Pretending the regime cared for workers. Pretending that the economy was sound and prosperous. Pretending that the West had a criminal policy of enslaving people in a senseless consumer society only fit for the rich. Pretending that you can fool everybody all the time. Pretending that all this could be kept safe behind a wall.

But when the collapse came it was sudden and devastating. It was like a sand castle knocked over by a simple wave. And even the relatively more prosperous East Germany fell apart, just as if it had never existed.

So that day, in the cold German au-



tumn, after years of looking at the Wall with fear, contempt and disgust, the citizens took their hammers and

knocked it down. Unopposed and undisturbed by the zealous East German guards that so many times before had not hesitated to shoot at anybody trying to get near with the intention of escaping. And that was not only the end of the Wall. It was the end of East Germany, Eastern Europe as a political entity,

Communism in Europe and in Russia, and the end of the Cold War. And also, the end of pretending and the beginning

of a new reality. The iron curtain, made famous by Churchill more than forty years before, was finally torn open.

And that meant a day trip to freedom for thousands, as The Times reported from West Berlin: "Wild jubilation spread throughout West Berlin yesterday as thousands of East Germans, cheering, signing and waving flags, streamed across the Wall to see for themselves the other half of a city that has been sealed off for 28 years. Thousands of young West Berliners clambered on to the concrete wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate to look across in amazement at the lines of police who stood, revolvers firmly locked in their holsters, smiling at the young people on the Eastern side who came up to them with flowers and smiles".