

**October 31, 1989**

**Information Note from Romanian Embassy in Berlin  
to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Note from Romanian Embassy in Berlin to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding peaceful street protests in the GDR, the opening of dialogue between government and citizens, and the serious effort to enact reforms, including a cessation of criticizing West Germany in the media

**Original Language:**

Romanian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

31 October 1989, 06:10 pm

Cde. Constantin Oancea, Deputy [Foreign Affairs] Minister,

In regard to the evolution of the political situation in the German Democratic Republic (GRD) we inform [you of] the following:

1. Street protests have not ceased, rather, in the past few days, they have grown in intensity and size. It is estimated that only yesterday, 30 October, when major protests took place in Berlin, Leipzig, Halle, Magdeburg, Schwerin, Suhl, etc., the number of participants [in street actions] reached over half a million (in Leipzig alone, official data put the number of protesters at 200,000). The banners carried referred to the freedom of the press, legalization of opposition organizations, freedom of travel, freedom of association, cessation of [politically-based] privileges, etc. All protests were peaceful. The state security and police forces did not intervene. The First Secretary of the Berlin SED Committee, G. Schabowski, said, during a discussions with [Berlin] residents, that "[these] protests will become part of the political culture of the GDR." The authorities are asking that, in the future, the organizers of such marches obtain, in advance [and] within a given time-frame, the necessary permits. Some organizations have done so at this time. It was considered, by the authorities, inappropriate at this time to take action against spontaneous protests.

2. Throughout the entire country debates are taking place, with participants from the Party leadership, [government] ministries, economists, cultural [leaders], factories, etc. Some debates are being broadcast live on radio and/or on television. Based on the debates, we transmit the following main ideas emerging:

There are committees being formed to investigate the abuses of power [committed] by police forces during the protests which took place on 7 and 8 October (the Lieutenant-General F. Rausch, commander of the Berlin Police, has publicly apologized for the acts of brutality committed by some police officers).

Legalizing [political] opposition. The SED leadership has not yet given a clear response to this demand. Practically however, all autonomous [political] organizations are tolerated and are acting unabated. Within diplomatic circles it is believed that the legalization of organizations such as "New Forum" is only a matter of time. Some concern was caused by the organization of a Social-Democratic Party, which requested its acceptance into the Socialist International. Its [political] platform is classically Social-Democrat, the reformist views within a pluralist society and market economy.

The leadership role of the SED, reaffirmed by Egon Krenz's inauguration speech, is beginning to be debated. The parties that up to this time have acted under the leadership of the SED within the Democratic Front (the Liberal-Democrats, the Christian-Democrats, the National-Democrats, and the Democratic Peasants Party) are beginning to raise the issue of equality of rights. Recently, Manfred Gerlach, president of the Liberal-Democratic Party, suggested that a commission be established which should analyze, from a constitutional, political, social, etc. standpoint the leadership role of the SED.

The reevaluation of the role and structure of the citizen and mass organizations. Intense and polemical discussions are taking place within the Free German Youth Organization [SED youth organization]. Many [of its members] call for dissolving the organization, or, at the very least, maintaining it as a umbrella organization for independent unions of students, young workers, soldiers, etc. Great uproar is taking place within unions. The President [of the Federation of Unions] board, Harry Tisch,

member of the Politburo of the CC of the SED, was asked to retire. The union board will make a decision on 17 November (it is considered that Harry Tisch will lose his position in the Politburo on 8 November and will, subsequently, lose his position as president of the union). Workers have suggested the idea of creating "independent unions."

Furthermore, public debates regarding the renewal of the economic system have begun. The development of new ideas [regarding economic development] necessitates a longer time. From sources close to the embassy we have been informed that Egon Krenz has written a letter to the regional party bosses in which he requests that they make all efforts necessary for the mobilization of the people in the attempt to complete the annual [production] plan. It is estimated that [the production goals of] the five-year plan will not be met. Debates have also begun regarding the modification of the educational system. The criticism directed at the educational system is an indication that Margot Honecker will also be removed from her leadership position at the ministry [of education].

3. From a source at the FRG embassy, we have found out that the Federal Government is willing to work with Egon Krenz, in a constructive manner, since it has been proven that the new leader of the GDR government is willing to make the profound reforms [needed]. However, the West-German government hopes that the changes taking place in the GDR will continue to develop in the direction of changes taking place in Poland and Hungary. West-German diplomats have said that they have taken great interest in the declarations of some SED leaders who suggested that "we will take a close look at the experiences of the Soviet Union, Poland and Hungary". The same diplomats have noted that the policy of "de-ideologizing" ["dezideologizare"] the relationship between the two German states.

In any case, we have noticed that in the past days all attacks against the FRG have disappeared from mass media. Yesterday, 30 October, the weekly show "Black Channel," on the air for the past 30 years, was taken off air. [In the show,] TV editorialist Karl Eduard von Schnitzler was sarcastically commenting on the politics of the West-German government. The West-German mass media hailed "the putting to pasture of the last cold war." West-German diplomats consider that the alignment of [the East-German] government with Gorbachev's policies offers a real chance for the reopening of the "German problem."

(ss)[Ambassador] Gheorghe Caranfil