

**October 20, 1989**

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

**Citation:**

"Information Note of the Romanian Embassy in Berlin to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs", October 20, 1989, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AMAE, Berlin/1989, vol. 2, pp. 326-330. Translated for CWIHP by Mircea Munteanu.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/112509>

**Summary:**

Note from the Romanian Embassy in Berlin to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the election of Egon Krenz as Secretary General of the SED and his efforts to create open dialogue, reform the system and initiate changes in the GDR system

**Original Language:**

Romanian

**Contents:**

Translation - English

20 October 1989; 02:30 pm

Cde. Constantin Oancea, Deputy [Foreign Affairs] Minister

Based on the first reactions [we] noticed from the diplomatic community in Berlin regarding the events taking place in the German Democratic Republic (GDR), we would like to communicate the following conclusions regarding the current orientation of the SED leadership after Egon Krenz was elected Secretary General:

1. The televised speech made by Egon Krenz on the day of his election, in which he announced the "continuation of the policies initiated by the declaration of the [SED] Politburo on 11 October" caused disappointment among the GDR population since the declaration did not contribute to the reducing the tensions existing in the GDR, rather being a cause for the major popular protest which took place in the city of Leipzig. The West-German mass-media also presented a mainly negative image of Egon Krenz, which added to the confusion and anxiety of the GDR population.

Egon Krenz's declarations that regarding the value of socialist society ("Socialism is the only humane alternative to Capitalism") as well as [his declarations regarding] the leadership role of the SED, has initially led to the conclusion-both internally and externally-that Egon Krenz, taught and promoted politically by Erich Honecker, will faithfully continue [Honecker's] political policies. Because of those conclusions, the idea that Egon Krenz is only a "temporary solution" until such a time that a [SED] Secretary General could be elected who will make sweeping reforms, is being hinted at primarily by West-German [mass media], but also by mass media in Poland and Hungary.

2. The majority of diplomats from Socialist countries are beginning to believe that those conclusions were drawn before their time.

From his first day on the job, Egon Krenz began by initiating a major transformation in the understanding of how Socialist society is supposed to be built.

The first measure [in this policy of change] has been a complete transformation of the propaganda [machine], of [the control of] the mass-media and, in general, of the policy of informing the public. There are no longer any topics on which the radio and television stations are prevented from reporting.

Egon Krenz placed himself at the forefront of this policy of informing the public, opening the dialogue between the party leadership and all citizens of the GDR.

The GDR [state-owned] television broadcast live a meeting between the General Secretary of the SED and workers in a [one of the] big industrial complexes in Berlin. During an open discussion, which was not organized thematically [by the Party], the workers raised, in an extremely critical fashion, all the problems that are concerning them (what are the causes for the current wave of emigration; why color TVs and other [mass-consumption] goods are so expensive; how can [the state] find a better method of implementing the principle of compensation based on [worker] efficiency; what measures will be implemented [to insure] the people's freedom of travel; etc.). Similar discussions took place between [regional] party First Secretaries and workers in central institutions, agricultural cooperatives, etc. The mass-media is also broadcasting opinions of citizens that have "a different opinion than the SED."

During the same TV program, [broadcast on] 19 October, representatives of the SED's Academy of Socio-Economic Sciences answered live questions from viewers received via telephone. West-German correspondents are allowed to film anything they want

and to interview both citizens and official representatives, on any subject.

In diplomatic circles it is suggested that this re-orientation of the mass media marks the official alignment of the SED leadership to [the principle of] "transparency" ("glasnost"), implemented by Gorbachev. Members of the CC of the SED have confirmed for us that the policy of [distributing] information and propaganda in the GDR will experience "a complete and irreversible opening." Egon Krenz declared however that he will [attempt to] insure that, the same, anarchic, secondary effects of perestroika will not take hold in the GDR.

3. An urgent problem is the necessity to calm the situation in the country.

The SED leadership [has declared] its willing[ness] to conduct, "in a constructive and tolerant fashion," a dialogue with all citizens and [political] organizations, even the dissident circles, [in an effort to] bring about a political not violent resolution to the street protests. Meanwhile, we have confirmed, from a trusted source, that the state security and police forces have not intervened during the 16 October protests in Leipzig on orders from Egon Krenz.

As you well know, the protest was peaceful, no incidents being reported.

During his first day as Secretary General, Egon Krenz met with the president of the Lutheran Church leadership, Bishop Werner Leich. The SED leadership knows that the Lutheran Church is a political factor who is gaining [political] influence and around who various dissident movements are being polarized.

Bishop Leich asked Egon Krenz to mandate the ratification of a new law regarding the freedom of travel for [GDR] citizens, to include in the debate independent [political] organizations ("New Forum," etc.) and to debate within the Party leadership a new election process (the Church and other dissident movements have, with a vote of 99 percent [in favor], contested the results of the local elections of 7 May of this year). The Lutheran Church is even asking for moving forward the date of the future elections, [scheduled] for 1991, and organizing them [based on] "democratic principles."

Egon Krenz was, in principle, favorable to the suggestions of Bishop Leich, which, after the meeting, declared that, if there will indeed be an open dialogue [between the Party and the opposition] "there will be no need to protest in the street."

4. Based on the facts known at this time, it seems that the ability of people to travel will, slowly, be fully liberalized. Official representatives declared that, at the end of the process, every GDR citizen will possess a passport.

Egon Krenz said that, this issue is made more difficult by the fact that the FRG is retaining its "right to care for GDR citizens" and by the fact that the FRG government is refusing to recognize GDR citizenship. Western diplomats told us that Egon Krenz is willing to negotiate with the West-German government a protocol of "respecting" GDR citizenship if a recognition of the GDR is impossible at this time. It is believed that the West-German government, which cannot receive GDR refugees ad infinitum nor desires the de-population of the GDR, will accept some compromise on the issue.

5. A problem which will, in the long term, be at the forefront of the SED leadership's preoccupations, is economic development.

The fact that [ID?] Guenter Mittag has been relieved of his duties is important. [He] was [until recently] single-handedly [and] with an iron-fist deciding the GDR's economic policies. The issues that are most often talked about are the elimination of discontinuity in manufacturing, correlating planning indicators, the application of the principle [by which] wages depend of work [done] ("the principle of productivity,") improving the balance of trade, reducing the disproportion between production and

supply of [mass-consumption] goods, raising the efficiency of implementing the discoveries of research and development, etc.

6. The next plenary meeting of the CC of the SED will take place on 8 November of this year (the information was obtained from the Foreign Affairs Directorate (FAD) of the CC of the SED). All the concerns of the Party and [GDR] citizens will be clearly defined then.

In a "spur of the moment" meeting with the personnel present at the CC of the SED building, Egon Krenz asked for support, which [he said] should manifest itself in the form of democratic centralism, with criticism going both ways and not only "top-down." [He] also said that "in this country [the GDR] all will be free and [all will be] possible, under the aegis of a socialist state, of course." (information transmitted by FAD CC SED)

(ss)[Ambassador] Gheorghe Caramfil

[Source: AFMA, Berlin/1989, vol. 2, pp. 326-330-translated for CWIHP by Mircea Munteanu]