

Document 1: Transcript of SED Politburo Sessions
September 5, 1989ⁱ

[Oskar] Fischer: The letter from Comrade Shevardnadze was forwarded by Comrade Gorinovich. He emphasized the Soviet Union's concern over the further escalation of the campaign against the GDR. Kvitsinsky will speak with Genscher's representative to cool or temper feelings in the FRG. Fischer told Gorinovich that the article in Pravda was indeed good, but the Soviet side has far more possibilities.ⁱⁱ O. Fischer's proposal to convene the Committee of Foreign Ministers of the Warsaw Treaty states met with misgivings from Gorinovich. That did not materialize too quickly. One must take into consideration the deviating viewpoints in Poland and Hungary as well. Fischer stuck to the proposal, but Shevardnadze's representative, Aboimov, had reservations too. It seems clear that Hungary will be yielding to the pressure from the FRG. Németh, Pozsgay, and Horn are not playing their cards openly. Minister of the Interior Horváth views the situation better. A change in the Hungarian position, beginning with the emigration of GDR citizens from September 11, should not be expected.

[Willi] Stoph: The West wants to continually raise the stakes. Hungary supports this in reality, particularly with the open borders. That goes against all treaties. The FRG's campaign also goes against the agreements between Erich Honecker and Kohl. We must present our situation more aggressively to our allies and other countries. [...]

[Kurt] Hager: Hungary is playing a double game. Their meeting in Bonn is further kept in secret.ⁱⁱⁱ The Hungarian gate remains open. It is therefore necessary for the Warsaw Treaty states to present our point of view to Hungary. In the long run such a negative position by Hungary does not bode well for friendly discussions between the two of us. What they are doing is a breach of hitherto normal relations. We are faced with the question of how we should continue to conduct ourselves with Hungary. For me, that is still an open question. But the Hungarian position worsens with respect to us--in favor of Bonn. They will obey orders from Bonn. [...]

[Werner] Krolikowski: I am in agreement with the letter by Erich Honecker,^{iv} the newscast declaration, and the other materials. We must continue unwaveringly:

1. To strengthen the GDR
2. To strengthen the alliance system, particularly with the Soviet Union
3. To expose the FRG campaign

One must fundamentally assess the enemy's entire campaign and present it to the Politburo. We should use Shevardnadze's letter as an opportunity to make the first proposals. We must also continue to work with Hungary, so that what is planned does not occur. [...]

[Erich] Mielke: Hungary is betraying socialism. The proposal by Fischer for a foreign ministers' meeting is very important. It concerns the power relationships in socialism in general. If Hungary continues to proceed with this, we risk having Hungary become a transit country. We must, however, support our comrades in Hungary, too. We provide our comrades with theoretical articles, which are being read and studied. What matters though is to clarify the practical questions in the spirit of these good, theoretical articles. [...]

[Source: Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR-Bundesarchiv.
Translated by Christiaan Hetzner.]

ⁱ Standing in again for Egon Krenz at the session was Wolfgang Herger, who took down the minutes. [Footnote in the original.]

ⁱⁱ Under the headline "Hour of the Hypocrites," Pravda ran an article by M. Podklyuchnikov. The West German media was made responsible above all for the situation in Hungary. See Neues Deutschland, September 1, 1989.

ⁱⁱⁱ During a surprise visit to Bonn, Hungarian Prime Minister Németh and Foreign Minister Horn reached agreement with Chancellor Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher to open the Hungarian border to the West to those GDR citizens who wanted to emigrate. See Horn, Freiheit, die ich meine.

^{iv} On September 5, Neues Deutschland first published an article by Erich Honecker entitled "40 Years of the German Democratic Republic," which was originally written for the theoretical journal of the Central Committee of the SED, "Unity." See Einheit, 1989 Volume 9/10, p. 788. [Footnote in the original.]