

Document 8.

September 29, 1989, 16:35, Prague – GDR Ambassador Helmut Ziebart to the SED Central Committee and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Berlin, relaying his observations from conversations with officials of the CPCz and the CSSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

BStU Berlin, MfS, HA II, 32922, Fol. 5 – 7.

Translation by Todd Hammond.

During a conversation at the Chinese reception, Com. Lenárt told me that on September 29 the Presidium adopted the report of Com. Sadovský on the situation at the FRG embassy, and recommended that the proposals for resolving the current situation be passed as a suggestion to the SED Central Committee. Ambassador František Langer was charged with delivering it to Com. Sieber or Com. Axen. A large number of GDR citizens are present at the embassy of the FRG and, Com. Lenárt continued, the effects on the CSSR as a result of this (the daily arrival of more GDR citizens, the streets of Prague full of abandoned personal cars, absolutely insufficient hygienic conditions on the embassy grounds, giving rise to fears of epidemic) force consideration of what further steps might be taken. He suggested the following possibilities, which have been considered by the Presidium:

1. Drastic reduction of current numbers of citizens of the GDR “in the form of departure by bus via the territory of the GDR to the FRG”. On the territory of the GDR the necessary formalities for emigration can be carried out. Meanwhile the GDR could proceed selectively; i.e. persons who should be charged with criminal behavior would not be included in the operation.
2. Resolving the emigration of the [GDR] citizens at the FRG embassies as part of a general amnesty on the fortieth anniversary of the GDR.

Com. Lenárt said that the CSSR would not agree to the request that a certain building complex be placed at the disposal of the GRD citizens on the basis of extraterritoriality; a role is played by the fact that the CSSR “has nothing appropriate in that sense available”.

After taking leave of Com. Lenárt, Com. Sadovský, who was present during the conversation, shared with me the following ideas from his report to the Presidium:

- The CSSR finds itself in a difficult situation, because Vogel’s proposal was not taken advantage of so as to have a “broader impact”, and the FRG has rejected all offers to secure the territory of the embassy.
- After the visit of the lawyer Vogel to the FRG embassy, the GDR failed to submit any new recommendations for solving the problem at the state level. “The idea expressed in Berlin of building a wall around the embassy” is evidently not acceptable to Prague.
- The GRD has submitted no official request for security measures aimed at preventing citizens of the GDR from gaining access to the embassy of the FRG.
- Trouble is spreading in the international context, along with the urgings of various circles within the CSSR (church, opposition groups) to find a solution.

I answered Com. Sadovský that the GDR as it has in the past will continue with regard to our common interests to carefully examine all proposals for a common solution. I pointed out that the GDR for humanitarian reasons has submitted, in the form of Vogel’s

newest suggestion, a far-reaching proposal that produced surprise even in Bonn. I remarked that in certain Bonn circles and media this proposal would not fit into their concept of a permanent campaign of slander against the GDR; official places in Bonn, as far as I know, have still made no promises that in the future the FRG will not allow its embassies to be abused as a place for smuggling people over the border.

At the same reception I spoke with Com. Jakeš. I told him how glad Com. Erich Honecker was that Com. Jakeš would take part in the celebrations in Berlin, and informed him about the fortieth anniversary program. Then I commented to him that the FRG continues its campaign against the GDR with unflagging intensity. I described to him the response of the Party leadership to this campaign in the speeches of recent days at the individual fortieth anniversary events. Com. Jakeš reacted as he did during his conversation with Com. Schabowski. He condemned these attacks against the GDR and CSSR, and characterized them as an attempt to stir up similar developments in both countries as unfortunately took place in Poland and Hungary. He said not one word about the situation at the FRG embassy or the new recommendations from the CSSR.

Com. Štěpán, with a plea for absolute confidentiality, told me that in his opinion, "behind the new considerations" was Genscher's meeting with Johannes and Shevardnadze in New York. As he heard it, Genscher supposedly asked Shevardnadze "to apply influence on the CSSR to react more flexibly to Bonn's requests". On the other hand Com. Štěpán emphasized that the presence of the GDR citizens at the FRG embassy and the many related consequences are becoming more and more of a public order problem in Prague.

*Ziebart*