

World and Nation

Borders to open between East, West

From Associated Press reports

BERLIN — East Germany's embattled Communist leaders said Thursday they would throw open western borders and allow citizens to travel freely anywhere for the first time since the Berlin Wall was erected in 1961.

The move would end decades of fencing in East Germans to prevent their flight to the West and could leave the wall — a symbol of the differences between East and West — as a mere monument to the Cold War.

New Communist leader Egon Krenz also urged a law ensuring free and democratic elections in a desperate attempt to gain control of his country.

More than 200,000 East Germans have fled West so far this year; more than 50,000 have left since Saturday alone. Hundreds of thousands of people have taken to the streets to demand democratic reforms and the end of 40 years of one-party rule.

Günter Schabowski, a member of the ruling Politburo, said East Germany's heavily fortified frontier

with West Germany would be opened as a provisional step until a law is passed to allow East Germans greater freedom of travel.

Schabowski did not say when the law would be passed and it was not immediately clear when the borders would be opened. He also said East Germany was not yet ready to tear down all its barriers.

The decision, made during a Central Committee meeting, means all East Germans "can travel over all East German border checkpoints," Schabowski told reporters in East Berlin.

Those who want to emigrate can go to West Germany directly without having to go through a third country, Schabowski said. East Germans have been fleeing through Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland.

Schabowski said those who only want to visit the West need visas, but that those should be issued quickly. He mentioned no limit about the length of stay abroad.

The Berlin Wall has divided Berlin

and the two German nations since 1961. Communist authorities built it to stop an exodus to West Germany. It became a symbol of the differences between East and West, differences that Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has sought to erase by urging reforms in the Soviet bloc.

Every U.S. president since John F. Kennedy has urged the East Germans to tear the wall down.

In Washington, Secretary of State James A. Baker III called the announcement a "very positive development."

"We've been talking a long time about freedom of travel being a basic human right. We've been talking a long time about open borders. We've been talking a long time about the importance of seeing the wall come down," he said.

Fifteen prominent East Berlin Communist intellectuals and officials wrote a letter to the Central Committee suggesting the Berlin Wall be torn down.

"It is also imaginable, even in the foreseeable future, that the wall will become a relic of the past," if an agreement is signed with West Germany that would prevent "damage to the East German economy," the group said in a letter that appeared Thursday in the Berliner Zeitung, a newspaper of the city's Communist Party organization.

As the protests and exodus have gathered momentum in recent days, Communist leaders have enacted increasingly desperate measures to quell the unrest.

Krenz, who assumed power just three weeks ago when his predecessor was

unable to calm his nation, on Wednesday purged much of the old guard from the Communist Party's ruling Politburo. The 21-member body was slimmed down to 11.

The Communist Party's Central Committee set a party conference for Dec. 15-17. A party conference, a forum for making major changes in party policy, was last held in 1956.

The official ADN news agency said the conference would discuss personnel changes in the 163-member Central Committee.

Krenz touched on the volatile topic of multiparty elections in a speech to the Central Committee that was published Thursday in state newspapers. He urged a "new election law that ensures free, democratic general elections with a secret ballot. He proposed "public supervision in every stage of the balloting."

Krenz did not say whether he was urging a true multiparty system in East Germany. Officials already say elections are democratic, even though the system guarantees the Communists virtually unanimous approval.

Krenz also promised new laws on freedom of assembly, association and the press, but gave no details.

However, he did say independent groups might have a role in the nation's politics as East Germany tries to recover from the shock of losing more than 200,000 mostly young, skilled workers to the West this year.

East Germany's pro-democracy opposition groups have made free elections their main demand.

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Chinese leader steps down, passes power to successor

From Associated Press reports

BEIJING — Deng Xiaoping, China's senior leader, passed his last formal leadership post to his chosen successor Thursday, and the Communist Party laid out an austere economic plan for the next two years.

Deng, 85, resigned as chairman of the party's powerful Central Military Commission in favor of party chief Jiang Zemin. He still heads the State Military Commission, a virtual mirror of the party group, but said in a letter released Thursday he also would leave that job.

The move solidifies Jiang's position and appears at least to suspend a reported power struggle between him and President Yang Shangkun. Jiang, 63, had not held a national post until his elevation to party leader after the pro-democracy movement was crushed in June.

Foreign diplomats and Chinese sources agree Deng is likely to remain the leading voice in party and government affairs, as he has been since leaving the Politburo and Central Committee in 1987.

Contras, Sandinistas begin talks

UNITED NATIONS —

Nicaragua's foreign minister said Thursday his government will meet Contra demands for a truce and amnesty if the rebels agree to begin disbanding by the end of the month.

The U.S.-backed Contras and Nicaragua's leftist Sandinista government began their first direct talks in more than a year Thursday in an effort to end an 8-year-old war that has taken an estimated 12,000 lives.

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar and his Organization of American States counterpart,

News in Brief

Joao Clemente Baena Soares, opened the meeting, then turned the mediation effort over to aides.

Foreign Minister Miguel d'Escoto of Nicaragua said before the meeting the key Contra demands would be met if demobilization began by the end of November.

The Contras insist on resumption of the cease-fire President Daniel Ortega ended last week, a general amnesty and a visit by a Contra delegation to Nicaragua to make sure it is safe for the rebels to return.

Wholesale prices go up

WASHINGTON — Wholesale prices rose 0.4 percent in October as the biggest spurt in food costs in 22 months offset the positive effects from moderating energy prices, the government reported Thursday.

While the increase in the Labor Department's Producer Price Index was double what economists had been expecting, most of them stressed that they saw no reason for worries that inflationary pressures are threatening to get out of hand.

The 0.4 percent October rise was down from a giant 0.9 percent September increase, and many economists predicted that the news on inflation will continue to improve in coming months as a slowing economy takes more pressure off prices.

For the first 10 months of this year, prices at the wholesale level have been rising at an annual rate of 5.2 percent, compared to an increase of 4 percent in 1988.

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Director

process and by intentionally making it difficult for witnesses to attend the Step 3 hearing of a grievance filed by officers Edwards, Bowler and Lonnie Sexton.

Edwards and Bowler claimed Sherman made them wash their patrol cars in retaliation for being scheduled as witnesses in Sexton's hearing. Sexton had charged he was unfairly passed over for promotion.

Edwards and Bowler said they also would like to see Mauer removed.

"They had about the same sort of situation under the previous director, and the previous director left, and then Maj. Mauer stayed on," Bowler said. "Each time he has been under two directors, and both directors have left, and it has been pretty much the same

problem.

"So, we feel the director may have been half the problem, but the chief certainly had a lot of input. As long as you've got a person continually advising a director in the wrong way, and the director making decisions, you are bound to have chaos. If Mr. Sherman was so wrong enough as to resign, and the chief was backing him 100 percent, I don't feel we can have a new beginning as long as the chief is still here."

Edwards said, "I think what is needed in this department is a fresh start with all new people at the top."

Mauer also declined to comment on the possibility of being reassigned.

No decisions have been made about other possible administrative changes in the department, Tuchi said.

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Lewis

campaign four months in advance? It is unfortunate that Brien's decision has forced these fine individuals to announce at such an early date. It cannot benefit the student body to have a campaign that lasts four months."

Lewis said he didn't agree with Davis' assessment of his announcement.

He met with many people before he made his announcement, and this meeting included anybody he had spo-

ken with in the last two months who "expressed some form of interest" in running for president, Lewis said.

"I talked with a lot of people, not just those individuals. Nobody has said to me 'I'm definitely running.' If my actions have forced anything, it has forced people to sit down and re-evaluate their own thoughts."

"The reason I went to the paper with it is because rumors can start and grow very quickly out of proportion."

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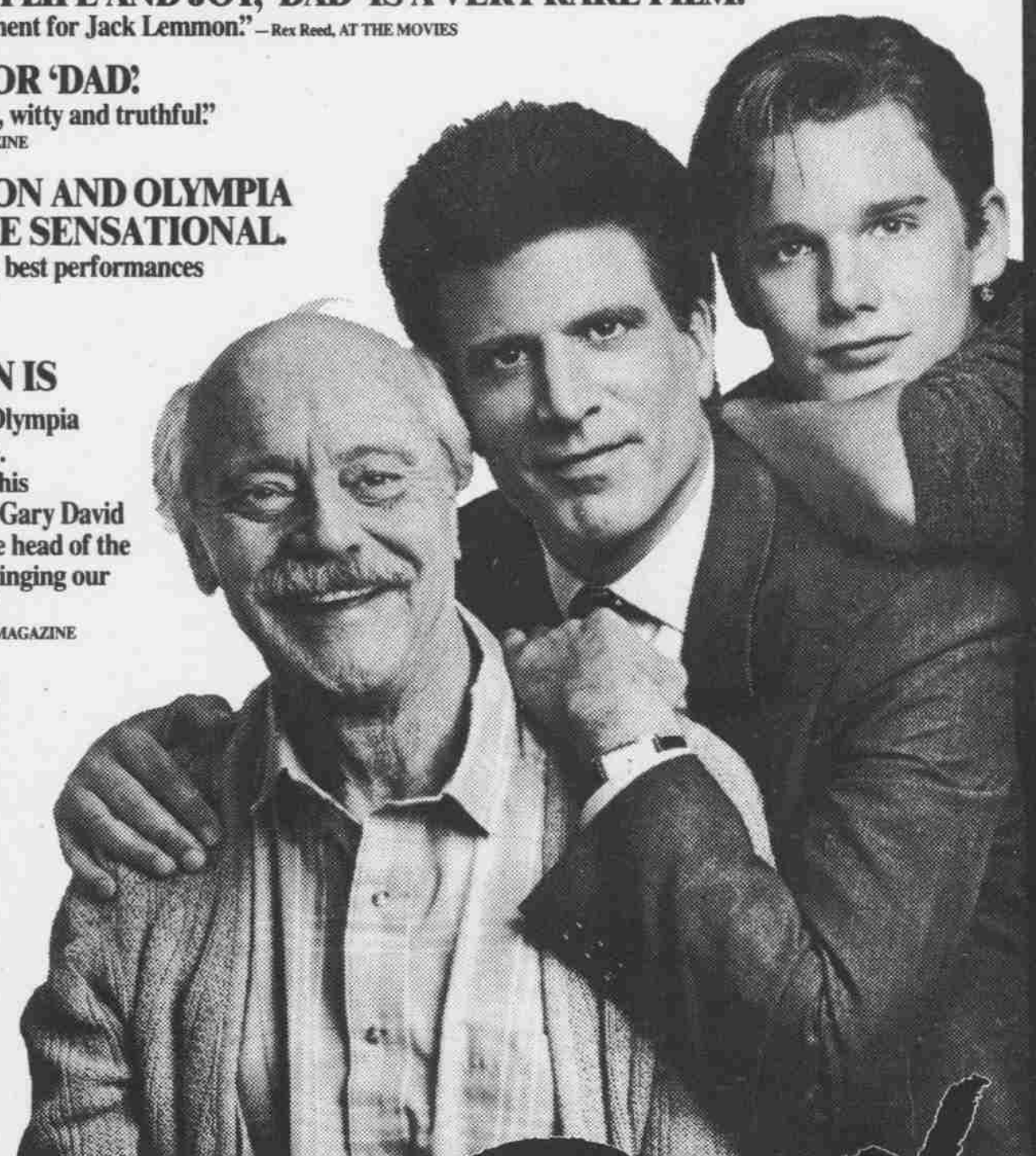
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