

World and Nation

East Germany's future in question

By DAVID KAUFMAN

Staff Writer

The weekend's events in communist East Germany will most likely not result in the reunification of East and West Germany in the near future, and free elections promised by the communist East German government (GDR) will take some time to become a reality, experts said.

The GDR announced Thursday that it would grant its citizens the freedom to travel anywhere, and visa require-

News Analysis

ments were temporarily waived for the opening of the borders. Over the weekend, 3 million East Germans crossed the Berlin Wall, which had symbolized the separation of the East and West since 1961 when it was constructed during the onset of the Cold War.

Germans from both sides celebrated through the weekend. West Berlin was swamped by East Germans, most of whom just wanted to see the capitalist West, but many of whom also came to collect the 100 marks (about \$55) that the West German government had offered them. Lines at banks stretched for miles.

The Kurfurstendamm, one of the city's best shopping streets, was mobbed by East Germans spending their Deutsche marks. Most of the money given out by the West German government was put directly into the economy, creating a boom in Berlin and shortages of many consumer items including cigarettes, blue jeans and almost every kind of food. Highways were gridlocked in both directions as most of those who came to the West went back home again.

"Only one-percent of those who went to West Germany this weekend stayed," said Helga Welsh, a professor at the University of South Carolina who specializes in Eastern European politics.

Welsh said the sudden change in policy of the GDR was a response to the mass exodus of East Germans fleeing to the West through Czechoslovakia and Austria. The majority of those who fled were young, skilled laborers whose departure resulted in a labor shortage and an economic crisis.

Those who stayed in East Germany have become more courageous and are no longer afraid to speak out, Welsh said.

"The people have lost the fear of repression," she said.

The GDR has promised free elections in the future, possibly by the end of this year or in the beginning of 1990. Welsh said it was uncertain whether the communists would give up their power after the elections and develop a system such as Poland's in which the Communist Party is granted a percentage of seats in the senate.

Gandhi

University of Mississippi while collecting data for a book about racism in the United States, India and South Africa.

Discrimination is the same in all three countries, he said; the only difference is that in South Africa it is legal and supported by the government.

When he and his wife came to the United States two years ago, he said he was shocked to see how black and white students segregated themselves at Ole Miss. Gandhi said partially through his efforts, they have been drawn closer together in the past two years.

Gandhi, wearing a conservative gray suit, did not look much like his legendary grandfather, but he did sound the same themes of non-violence used to

The change in East Germany is not directly attributable to Mikhail Gorbachev's new policies in the Soviet Union, but to a long train of events throughout the Eastern Bloc and the relaxation of oppression by the Soviet government, Welsh said.

Wolfgang Reinicke, a West German and an expert on East Germany at the Brookings Institute in Washington D.C. said the "changes occurred mostly because of Gorbachev."

Reinicke said he believed the Soviet Union would not support repressive measures by the GDR, and that left the government with no choice but to give its citizens the freedom of travel and the incentive to stay, freedom of speech and assembly and the promise of free elections.

The elections, he said, would take some time because the new parties are not organized and they were not prepared for immediate change. However, having received concessions, East Germans have decided to keep up the protests in order to maintain the movement's momentum, Reinicke said. Demonstrations were planned for Monday night.

Both Reinicke and Welsh said reunification of East and West Germany is not likely to happen in the near future, although both indicated that it probably will happen. Both said they thought talk of reunification was premature.

Jay Kosminski, an arms expert at the Heritage Foundation in Washington D.C., said reunification would most likely occur if free elections were held and non-communists won.

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characterize his grandfather.

"Non-violence is much more than the non-use of physical violence," he said in response to a question from the audience about South Africa.

He said the black majority in South Africa curses and throws rocks at their opponents and that is not non-violence. As long as protesters in South Africa do not rely on non-violent means, success is likely to elude them because they are not trying to improve all human relations in South Africa.

The Network for Minority Issues will hold a panel discussion based on Gandhi's lecture centering on the theme, "What Can We Do?" today at 5 p.m. in 211 Union.

Gandhi was born in Durban, South Africa, where he was a victim of apartheid. At 22, he took up the cause of India's "Untouchables."

The elder Gandhi led India to independence from British colonial rule in 1947 through a policy of passive resistance. A Hindu fanatic assassinated him in January 1948.

Soviets work on strategies to start economic recovery

From Associated Press reports

MOSCOW — Top Soviet economists struggled Monday to forge a consensus on their first plan to offer a step-by-step proposal for pulling the country out of its economic crisis.

"We cannot wait for reform. The time is such that it will not wait for us," said Deputy Premier Leonid Abalkin, an economist who has emerged in recent months to lead President Mikhail Gorbachev's economic braintrust.

"The value of time has grown enormously, and we must make our steps forward shackled by very heavy weights on our legs," he said.

Despite Gorbachev's previous appeals for unity, it was apparent the plan developed by Abalkin faces opposition from other leading economists.

Abalkin said that after four years of reforms, the public also is deeply suspicious.

Problems plague radar planes

WASHINGTON — The Customs Service should not buy any more frontline radar planes for detecting drug-ferrying aircraft until electronics problems are resolved, the chairman of a Senate appropriations panel said Monday.

Sen. Dennis DeConcini, chairman of the Appropriations subcommittee that funded the purchase of P-3 airborne early warning aircraft, said Customs must get the two planes already in service operating fully by March or refuse delivery of a third plane in April.

"If they don't fix it, I'm going to come down on them hard," said DeConcini, D-Ariz., chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Treasury, Postal Service and General Government.

DeConcini said Customs Service air crews had told him that problems in tracking and locating suspect planes were not being addressed.

Court allows random drug tests

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Monday permitted random drug testing for Boston police, offering new evidence that the justices condone widespread testing of government employees in jobs affecting public safety.

The court, without comment, let stand a ruling that forcing police officers to undergo the random tests — even when there is no reason to suspect drug abuse — does not violate their privacy rights.

A Boston police union official panned the action.

News in Brief

"I'm disappointed in the fact that the Supreme Court has said that police officers in this city and in this country have different constitutional rights than other citizens," said Robert Guiney, president of the Boston Police Patrolmen's Association.

Nicaraguan violence censured

WASHINGTON — The Bush administration on Monday called a Salvadoran guerrilla offensive that killed hundreds of people "senseless violence," and it accused Nicaragua of arming the rebels.

"It's a very difficult situation with this very large and organized and clearly calculated offensive under way," White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said. "And while it is being handled, it certainly represents an escalation of the attacks from anything we've seen in recent months."

"The president stands with the freely elected government of El Salvador in condemning this senseless violence," he said.

Fitzwater said El Salvador's president, Alfredo Cristiani, had not asked for assistance to quell the fighting, the heaviest since a 1981 offensive by the Marxist-led rebels. He said he would not rule out U.S. involvement, adding: "We can never predict the future. But at this point, it's not anticipated."

Fraud imperils pension programs

WASHINGTON — Fraud and mismanagement could wipe out the retirement nest eggs of millions of working Americans in private pension programs and saddle taxpayers with a multibillion-dollar bailout, according to government officials and agency documents.

An Associated Press investigation found that at least one of every four private pension plans audited by the government is violating the law — yet the odds of any individual program being checked are barely one in a hundred.

In some cases, pension administrators have siphoned off millions of dollars by underreporting earnings. In others, employers never made required contributions, with pensioners discovering only upon retirement that the money was missing. Still other companies have simply dumped their pension obligations on a government insurance program that already is \$1.5 billion in the red.

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YOUR EYEGLASS PRESCRIPTION

What does the Federal Trade Commission say about "Eyeglass Prescriptions?"

Q. Can an eye doctor charge patients an extra fee for releasing eyeglass prescriptions?

A. No. It is illegal for an eye doctor to charge their patients any fee in excess of their normal examination fee as an extra charge for releasing or giving the patient a copy of their eyeglass prescription. Example, if their normal examination fee is \$40, they cannot add an extra \$5 or \$10 for giving you the prescription.

Q. When does an eye doctor have to give out a prescription?

A. The prescription must be given to the patient immediately after the eye examination is completed. This means that the doctor must give the patient his or her prescription before they begin selling you eyeglasses (if they also sell eyeglasses).

Q. What if the patient doesn't ask for the prescription? Does the eye doctor still have to give it out to his or her patient?

A. Yes. The Prescription Release Rule requires that the eye doctor prepare the prescription and physically offer it to the patient. Of course, the eye doctor can't force the patient to take it, but must offer him or her the written prescription. Simply asking the patient whether they want their prescription is not sufficient. It's been found that many consumers had never seen a prescription for corrective eye wear, and were unaware that they could take that piece of paper and use it to comparison shop.

Q. What is the penalty for violating the Rule?

A. The penalty for violating the Rule is up to \$10,000 per violation.

Q. How can you report violations of the Rule?

A. You can contact the Federal Trade Commission directly in Washington, D.C. at:

Eyeglasses TRR, Federal Trade Commission,
Room 281, Washington, DC 20580

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