

# Unrest in East Germany continues country's course remains uncertain

BERLIN (AP) — The Communist East German leadership on Wednesday strongly reaffirmed the nation's commitment to socialism but expressed willingness to discuss possible reforms.

A lengthy statement from the ruling Politburo capped a day of conflicting signals as to whether the country would maintain the course of hard-line leader Erich Honecker or undertake the type of reform now sweeping much of Eastern Europe.

"All expressions of opinion and suggestions for attractive socialism in the GDR (East Germany) are important," the Politburo said. "We are open to discussions."

The statement, distributed by the official news agency ADN, also addressed the issue of the exodus of tens of thousands of East Germans.

"We aren't indifferent when people who worked and lived here renounce our German Democratic Republic," the statement said. "The reasons for the step could be varied. We must

and will seek them out (the reasons) among ourselves, each in his place, all of us together."

The statement made no specific mention of the country's growing opposition movement, but it called on East Germans to refrain from the kinds of street demonstrations that swept through the country last week and on Monday night.

Earlier, party sources said high-ranking Communist officials had warned of possible labor unrest and demanded a report on the nation's "critical situation" from Honecker.

Also Wednesday, East Germany's chief ideologist Kurt Hager reversed himself and called for reform to curb growing unrest.

The demand for a report, made by party members at a meeting Tuesday of the Politburo, suggests Honecker may face an internal challenge to his 18-year leadership. The sources disclosed it soon after the radio broadcast Hager's remarks.

Party sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, said some members of the 163-seat Central Committee were invited to the meeting of the Politburo, which has 21 members. The sources said the meeting continued late Wednesday.

They quoted the complaining officials as telling Honecker "there are increasing signs of growing strikes in the factories" and "there is no time to waste."

Honecker was told some workers already were refusing to work overtime and called on the government to address the "increasing serious questions" of the the nation's people, the sources reported. He was asked to report by the end of the week, they said.

Politburo member Egon Krenz was responsible for the restraint shown by security forces during Monday's pro-democracy demonstrations in Leipzig, East Berlin and Dresden, the sources said. Krenz often is mentioned as a successor to Honecker.

## Study shows baby doctors' fear of lawsuits limits care to poor

WASHINGTON (AP) — Frequent malpractice lawsuits and sharply rising insurance premiums are causing some doctors to stop delivering babies, leaving poor women with only limited obstetrical care, an Institute of Medicine study said Wednesday.

A two-year study by a panel that included doctors, lawyers and educators found that "significant numbers" of obstetricians, other physicians and nurse-midwives are limiting the types of care they provide because of concern over being sued.

"The result is a serious shortage of obstetrical care in many rural and inner city areas," Roger J. Bulger, chairman of the Institute of Medicine study committee and president of the Association of Academic Health Centers, said.

"The fear of being sued has caused many doctors and midwives to limit care especially for women with high risk pregnancies," he said. "In urban areas, this often means that low-income women have been hurt the most by the lack of providers."

Bulger said such women generally

are more likely to smoke and have poor diets, both of which increase the risks of having an imperfect child.

The committee suggested both short-term and long-term solutions.

Immediate actions recommended were:

- States should subsidize medical liability premiums for obstetrical providers who treat women on Medicaid.
- Revive the National Health Service Corps. This would provide more loans for medical students who then would be obligated to serve in areas where physicians are in short supply.

For more permanent solutions:

- The committee said states should experiment with alternatives to the system of medical liability. Possible models could include a no-fault compensation system for certain conditions, such as neurological impairment of a newborn. Also, negotiated contracts between doctor and patient, establishing in advance a system of binding arbitration to settle disputes.
- Consideration of a plan by the American Medical Association that calls for an administrative processing of claims that would determine fault, fix awards and discipline offenders.

Bulger said the committee had no final answers, but did conclude that solutions must be found soon because if nothing is done soon "it will just get worse."

## Hispanic population in U.S. tops 20 million

WASHINGTON (AP) — There are more than 20 million people of Hispanic origin in the United States, a nine-year increase of 5-and-a-half million, the Census Bureau reported Wednesday.

"This is our first estimate of over 20 million," said Jorge Del Pinal, chief of the Ethnic and Hispanic Statistics Branch at the bureau. "It's up from about 14.5 million in 1980."

Hispanics constitute 8.2 percent of the U.S. population and are the fastest growing large population group. The bureau said immigration was a major factor in the increase, accounting for about half of the growth.

About two-thirds of the Hispanics in the United States live in just three states. California leads with 34 percent, followed by Texas at 21 percent and New York with 10 percent.

Florida has 8 percent of the nation's Hispanics, and there are significant populations in Illinois, New Jersey, Arizona, New Mexico and Colorado, the bureau reported.

Estimates are not prepared for every state because "Hispanics are not well spread out throughout the United States," Del Pinal said.

The Census report estimated the total Hispanic population of the United States at 20,076,000.

## Hemisphere moves toward press freedom IAPA report commends significant progress

MONTERREY, Mexico (AP) — The hemisphere is showing a "healthy tendency toward freedom of expression," Manuel Jimenez, president of the Inter-American Press Association said Wednesday.

"This year has been very significant in the history of freedom of the press and expression in America," Jimenez said in his final report to IAPA members at their 45th general assembly.

Paraguay is on the road to re-establishing a real democracy and creating a climate of freedom of the press and expression, Jimenez said.

The two leading candidates for president of Chile have been recognized for their struggle to re-establish press freedoms after 18 years of military rule by Gen. Augusto Pinochet, he said.

Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari's announcement that the government would sell its newspaper monopoly was received with "great surprise and satisfaction," he said.

"There's no doubt that all the above represents extraordinary news and that there exists in the continent a healthy tendency toward freedom of expression," Jimenez said.

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