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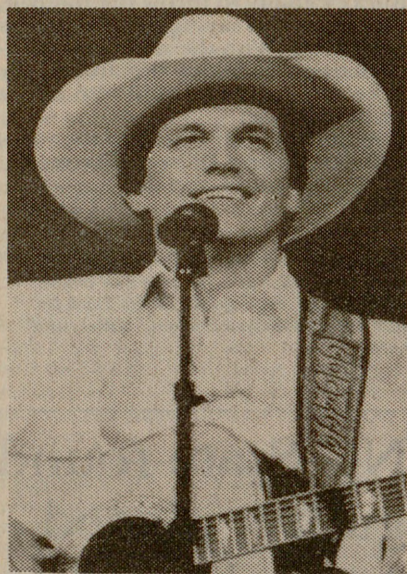
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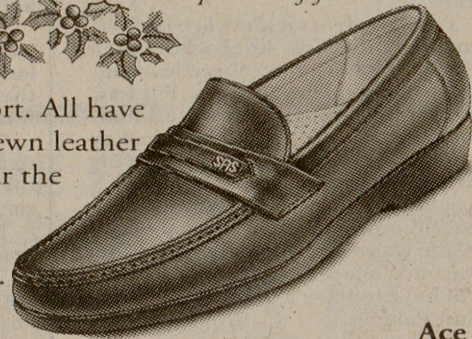
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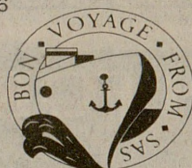
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WORLD & NATION

Wednesday, December 13, 1989

Letting freedom ring . . .

Communist party concedes East German system failed

EAST BERLIN (AP) — Pressured by a steady drain of disillusioned workers and increasing calls for reunification, East Germany's Communist Party conceded Tuesday that a flawed brand of socialism had hurt living standards.

In the past month, the Communists have given up their legal monopoly on power and that has raised questions about their mandate to govern until national parliamentary elections are held May 6.

Secretary of State James A. Baker met in Potsdam with Communist Premier Hans Modrow in a show of support for the nation's reforms.

One pro-reform group, Demokratischer Aufbruch, said Modrow and his Cabinet should step down. It does not appear that position enjoys broad support, however, since Modrow retains a fairly high standing among East Germans.

Communist Party leader Gregor Gysi said his party would not allow a "foreign policy vacuum" to develop despite the upheavals of the past two months.

"What we need in this country through May 6 is stability," Gysi said when informed of the reform group's

demand.

West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher traveled to East Berlin to meet with the group's leader Rainer Eppelmann. No details of the talks were disclosed.

The party's official daily, *Neues Deutschland*, blamed socialism for poor living conditions in the most blunt admission yet of the party's culpability in the nation's political and economic crisis.

"The governmental and administrative socialism has definitely failed as a social system in our country," the newspaper said.

But, it added, a new "democratic socialism" was in the making.

The party appeared torn over the question of closer ties with West Germany, and the newspaper called for "a qualified partnership" acceptable to European neighbors.

Allies of East Germany and West Germany have expressed reservations about a confederation between the nations or eventual reunification, as proposed by West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Baker tours East Germany

Talks with Modrow about 'peaceable' reform

POTSDAM, East Germany (AP)

Secretary of State James A. Baker III ventured into East Germany on Tuesday and offered U.S. economic assistance to still another Soviet ally bent on reform.

The bold and unprecedented visit to the site where the World War II Allies decided the future of a vanquished Germany was made after Baker sent a telegram to Moscow, advising the Soviets of his intentions.

In a 65-minute session with Prime Minister Hans Modrow and then a separate talk in a 19th century church with Lutheran ministers, Baker registered support for the

changes sweeping the onetime Stalinist state and said the Bush administration was prepared to provide the kind of help due Poland and Hungary as they turn toward market economies.

But he emphasized that the change must be peaceful. U.S. officials said Baker was concerned that retribution against former Communist Party officials could turn into uncontrollable violence with unpredictable consequences to its neighbors.

Standing alongside Modrow at the conclusion of their meeting, Baker said they had talked about "the im-

portance of moving forward peaceably and in a stable way."

"It is that, as much as anything else, that represents the political signal that we desire to send by being here today," Baker said.

The prime minister told Baker the evolution in the country, which will lead to multiparty elections in May, was "irreversible," U.S. officials said.

Baker's visit to Potsdam, the site of a 1945 conference that set conditions for the post-World War II division of defeated Germany, was added suddenly to his schedule late Monday night.

Remaining Communists leave office; Czechs anxious to get new president

PRAGUE, Czechoslovakia (AP) — Old guard Communists lost their last important jobs Tuesday, and the argument over whether Vaclav Havel will crown the peaceful revolution by becoming president moved into Parliament.

The presidential contest is the last round for an opposition that transformed Czechoslovakia in three weeks from a rigid Communist state to a society in which the party is giving up power for the first time in 41 years.

Central Prague was plastered with posters for Havel, an often-jailed playwright whose works were banned until the revolution began. About 500 people stood out-

side Parliament, shouting his name, as deputies entered.

Parliament has until Dec. 23 to elect a president, under the constitution, but some legislators want the choice to be made in a referendum of all citizens.

After discussions by constitutional lawyers from all parties, Politburo member Vasil Hohorita said it might take up to 60 days for an election to be held, whether in Parliament or by referendum.

He said Havel, who leads the Civic Forum opposition group, "represents something and in no way can we underestimate his position in society."

Gorbachev rejects push for democratic Reform debated

MOSCOW (AP) — Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet Parliament on Tuesday rejected reformers' efforts to revoke Communist Party's monopoly on power and push the nation along the road to multiparty democracy taken by Moscow's allies.

But as the Congress of People's Deputies began its winter session in the Kremlin, hundreds of parliamentarians supported debate on altering the party's legal status, indicating the idea is gaining popularity as reforms shake the Soviet Baltic and Eastern European nations.

The Congress, the 2,250-member Parliament that is theoretically the nation's highest political body, gave Gorbachev the green light he wanted for its 10-day session. Gorbachev urged them to focus on the economy.

"We need drastic reforms," the Soviet president said. "So far there are no improvements in the area."

"The key question of the agenda is righting the economic stages of economic reform and our approach to the five-year plan," Gorbachev said. He said the country needed a "never before" discipline and responsibility.

In other East bloc developments Tuesday:

• Thousands of Bulgarians rallied in Sofia outside a Communist Party Central Committee meeting to make sure the Communists keep their promises of reforms — including free elections and an end to the party monopoly on power.

An official said the party had enough talented people to promote its doctrine and manage the economy.

• Secretary of State James A. Baker III met in Potsdam with East German Premier Hans Modrow and told him of U.S. support for the reforms taking place there.

East Germany's Communist Party newspaper conceded that a botched brand of socialism had degraded living conditions, but said those times are past and a new "democratic socialism" is in the making.

• Czechoslovakia's ousted Communist hard-liners lost their last positions of power as Parliament formally accepted their resignations.

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