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Records of the Talks between GDR Comrade Erich Honecker, and Member of the Politburo and Minister for Foreign Affairs the USSR, Eduard A. Shevardnadze

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Summary:

GDR Chairman Honecker and Shevardnadze discuss the state of the German Democratic Republic and the CPSU's outlook on and relationship with East Germany, as well as both of their perspectives on the sociopolitical landscape in Poland, its recent election and the battle to maintain socialism in Poland.

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Eduard Shevardnadze. Our friends in the GDR need not worry. The Party will remain the leading force in society. It exercises control over all important processes, despite great difficulties. The most important decisions which the Politburo or the Central Committee has put before the Congress, meet with the consent of the Congress. The development of the situation at the Congress is being followed very attentively. In the first days ambitious and demagogic speeches received support. As the Congress proceeded, the ability of the deputies to differentiate between the truth lies and demagoguery has grown. A similar learning process is taking place among the people as well. In the beginning there were threats of strikes in case certain representatives would not be elected to the Supreme Soviet. The publishing of everything from Congress has proved to be correct. The CPSU must in the future adapt itself in its style of work to the new conditions.

Altogether one can be content with the results of the People's Congress. The Party has passed a difficult test. Henceforth the task is to solve urgent sociopolitical matters. Here the Soviet Union can learn much from the GDR. A compelling example of this was the most recent exhibition in Moscow on 'Berlin Days,' in which the mastery of social problems was vividly shown. Millions of Soviet citizens live in poverty. 20 million pensioners receive less than 70 rubles a month. In spite of great financial difficulties the Congress decided to raise the minimum pension to 80 rubles, for which the State must spend in all 4 to 5 billion rubles per year. This happens [happens] the awareness of the fact, that buying power has already considerably exceeded the supply of goods as it is. A further task of greater political importance is to increase the production of consumer goods. In addition it is necessary to solve the issue of housing. The GDR has correctly and in a timely manner focused on. A third difficulty is the extremely complicated national question. The assessment found earlier that the national question was forever solved was a big mistake. These problems existed long ago and have built up over the years. During the course of democratization they have been revealed. Special problems exist in the Transcaucuses, in the Baltic republics, and recently in Uzbekistan as well. One cannot be sure whether tomorrow will see new conflicts erupting in other regions. The Party requires a new nationality policy. In this respect, the CPSU is preparing itself for a corresponding plenary session. The writing of a new constitution is also a pressing matter.

"One knows that our friends in the GDR are well informed on the developments in the GDR, and are compassionate. Your valuable support would be highly appreciated in the Soviet Union."

Comrade Eduard Shevardnadze stated that Comrade Yakovlev will be received on Saturday by Comrade Czyrek at the request of Comrade Jaruzelski to receive information on the domestic developments in Poland. At the moment it is still difficult to guess how the situation in Poland will continue to develop. The most recent events have serious consequences. A profound analysis is necessary. It should be taken into account that "Solidarity" represents a real force. The PYWP must accept a real defeat and finds itself in a very difficult position. In Hungary as well an unsettling development is taking place.

Comrade Erich Honecker emphasized that he shares fully the evaluation made of Poland. At a meeting with Comrade Jaruzelski, [Jaruzelski] still gave an optimistic evaluation of the expected election results, and although the defeat was already becoming apparent.

It is well known that Poland lies between the GDR and the UDDR. Socialism cannot be lost in Poland.

In Hungary the processes are most probably unstoppable. Many Hungarian comrades fear that in connection with the planned reburial of the Prime Minister of 1956, Nagy, counterrevolution will break out again. What Poszgay proclaimed has nothing at all to do with socialism. The question is whether it is possible to prevent the splitting of the Hungarian working class. If not, Hungary will slip further into the bourgeois camp. Comrade Erich Honecker remarked that he remembers quite well the events of 1956 and the role Imre Nagy played.