

E. Germans make triumphant exodus West

HOF, West Germany -- Thousands of East Germans arrived to a triumphal welcome in West Germany on Sunday after their government agreed to let them flee to the West, the latest chapter in a historic exodus from an increasingly splintered Soviet bloc.

"We made it, we made it," screamed one tearful young woman after arriving in this northern Bavarian city at dawn.

"We had no future there," said 34-year-old Uwe Kuester of Cottbus.

About 6,000 refugees either arrived or were on their way from Czechoslovakia, border police said, and another 800 arrived from Poland.

The refugees had holed themselves up weeks ago in the West German embassies in Warsaw and Prague after they were unable to reach Hungary, a liberal Warsaw Pact nation that had opened its western border to the East Germans last month.

Many of those arriving here had tears of joy running down their faces. Others cheered and clapped wildly.

In Prague and Warsaw, East Germans who heard word of the exodus raced to railroad

stations, some arriving in time to jump on board the trains. West German news reports and witnesses said more East Germans were rushing in their cars toward Czechoslovakia and at least 200 were once again filling the embassy in Prague.

The new arrivals follow the more than 24,000 East Germans who have fled through Hungary since Sept. 10, when the reform-minded Communist government in Budapest decided to open its border.

Hard-line East Germany reluctantly agreed to the exodus and trains began shuttling refugees from Prague on late Saturday night. Trains from Poland arrived on Sunday.

The East German government insisted the refugees from Prague and Warsaw had been "expelled."

As part of the agreement with West Germany announced Saturday night, the East Germans had to travel in state-run trains back through their former Communist homeland as a face-saving measure for the government. Hard-line Czechoslovakia had vowed that it would not allow the refugees to leave for the West from Czechoslovakia.

Still, the action represented an embarrassing retreat for the aging leadership in East Berlin, which had severely criticized Hungary's action.

The once-unthinkable exodus of East Germans reflects dramatic changes in the East bloc and a growing disunity among its member states.

Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev, the galvanizing force for reforms sweeping much of Eastern Europe, will visit East Berlin this week for celebrations of East Germany's 40th anniversary. His talks with East German leader Erich Honecker are expected to deal with the exodus of young people, which has threatened the nation's already demoralized work force.

"I hope that Gorbachev, during his talks with the leaders of (East Germany) will try to convince them that political reforms are also in the interest of the German Democratic Republic," said West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who engineered the exodus.

In Prague, police initially surrounded the West German embassy to block newly arrived East Germans from scaling a spiked fence into

the muddy grounds. But the embassy later again began letting East Germans back into the embassy.

Bavarian border police spokesman Klaus Pappenfuss said six trains were bringing the more than 6,000 refugees from Prague during the course of the day.

Well-wishers handed out bottles of wine, champagne and fruit as the East Germans disembarked in Hof. Red Cross volunteers distributed hot tea, noodle soup, baby food and diapers to the refugee families.

Several former East Germans, who had fled earlier to the West from Hungary, carried a banner that read:

"We got out through Hungary and you made it through Prague. Soon the zone (East Germany) will be an empty coffin."

The East Germans were taken immediately to several refugee processing centers and temporary shelters set up by border police and the military, officials said.

West German law automatically grants East Germans citizenship on arrival. More than 100,000 East Germans have emigrated or fled to West Germany this year.



Andy Manhart/Daily Nebraskan

Survey gives curious answers

WASHINGTON -- Do you put on both socks and then both shoes, or put a sock and shoe on one foot and then the other?

How often do you weigh yourself?

When visiting a friend's house and the shower curtain is closed, do you look behind it?

While the better-known pollsters are asking Americans their political preferences or their thoughts on the great issues of the world, a couple of New Yorkers are raising questions that inquiring minds really want answered.

"We've always been compulsive, obsessive collectors of odd tidbits of information. How many people wear torn underwear under their expensive clothes? How many unmatched socks lie lonely in dresser drawers?" explain Mel Poertz and Barry Sinrod in their new book.

Under the modest title -- "The First Really Important Survey of American Habits" -- Poertz and Sinrod have compiled the answers

to the questions that have been burning holes in their curiosity.

They found, for example, that 19 percent of Americans put both the sock and shoe on one foot first, then the other, as opposed to the more common way: both socks and then both shoes.

How do they know these things? They asked.

More precisely, they polled a little more than 2,000 people across the country. Sinrod and Poertz, who are involved in marketing and polling, say their survey represents the tastes and habits of 89 percent of Americans aged 21 and over. However, details like margins of error that are popular with the more serious surveys were not reported.

"All totals are statistically correct and can be verified, trust us," Poertz and Sinrod say.

After making that leap of faith, readers will learn that:

● Only 7 percent of Americans admit looking behind a closed shower curtain when visiting a

friends home.

● 37 percent of Americans never weigh themselves. Some 41 percent of women and 37 percent of men said they never step on the scales.

● 67 percent of Americans say they spend less time in the bathroom than their mate does. The figure was the same for both sexes.

● 38 percent of the people responding say they clean their belly button every day; 20 percent say they never do so.

● 80 percent eat corn on the cob by going around the ear in the circle; 20 percent nibble from side-to-side, like a typewriter.

● 61 percent say they would wear torn underwear, 39 percent would not. Men were slightly more willing to wear the torn item at 68 percent. Only 57 percent of the women said they would. There was this further breakdown: 74 percent of white-collar workers said they would wear torn underwear, while only 48 percent of blue collar workers would.

Americans report drugs not big problem locally

NEW YORK -- Nearly one-third of American adults know someone who uses cocaine, but most say drug abuse is not a serious problem in their own neighborhoods, a poll has found.

While President George Bush pursues a multibillion-dollar war on illegal drugs, saying they are "sapping our strength as a nation," just 14 percent in the survey called the problem "very serious" where they live.

Big-city dwellers were the most concerned about drugs in their neighborhoods, with half saying illegal drugs posed a "very" or "somewhat" serious problem where they live, as opposed to "not too" or "not at all" serious.

In the nation as a whole, four in 10 rated drugs a serious local problem and nearly six in 10 did not.

To stop the flow of drugs into this country, eight in 10 respondents said Bush should order the military to patrol the borders for smugglers. But a minority of 43 percent said he should order military strikes against illegal drug operations in foreign countries.

Sixty-one percent in the Media General-Associated Press poll identified drug abuse as the nation's greatest problem overall, a level that has risen steadily in opinion polls as the issue drew increasing political and media attention.

Among that majority, barely more than a third expected the problem to lessen in the next decade. And respondents split sharply on whether the best line of attack is against drug producers, dealers or users.

Majorities came together, though, in opposing some priorities of Bush's program. While most of its funds are for law enforcement, for example, 60 percent said treating drug users will accomplish more than punishing them.

Moreover, a 57 percent majority said building more federal prison cells for drug offenders -- as Bush has proposed -- will fail to reduce drug abuse. Drug treatment and education were seen by far more people as effective.

Despite those differences, nearly three-quarters of the 1,071 respondents were convinced that the Bush administration is making a serious effort. And two-thirds said the federal government can reduce drug abuse significantly.

Respondents were split on whether Bush's \$7.9 billion plan spends enough money, too little or too much. About half wanted anti-drug money taken from other programs, while a third favored raising taxes. The rest were unsure.

Though taxes were not popular generally, three-quarters supported raising cigarette or alcoholic beverage taxes to pay for a bigger drug program, and seven in 10 supported a 1 percent increase in corporate income taxes.

Another funding scheme had less support: By 53-43 percent, respondents opposed a 1 percent increase in personal income taxes.

The poll, conducted Sept. 14-24, had a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

Lebanese dispute Syria's role in their country

TAIF, Saudi Arabia -- Lebanese lawmakers clashed Sunday over the presence of Syrian troops in their country and Christian leader Gen. Michel Aoun demanded a timetable for their pullout before agreeing to peace.

In Beirut, where Aoun made his comments, Christian forces and Syrian-backed Druse militiamen battled for 15 minutes around the mountain garrison of Souk al-Gharb, testing a fragile cease-fire. No casualties were

reported. Sources at the meeting reported a stormy session Sunday as the 63 members of Parliament -- 33 Christians and 30 Moslems -- gathered for a second day in their bid to end the 14-year-old civil war and address an Arab League peace plan.

The session was dominated by disagreements between Christians and Moslems over what Syria's role in Lebanon should be, said the sources, who spoke on condition of

anonymity. Supporters of Aoun, a Maronite Catholic, say they will not agree to give Moslems a greater share of political power until there is a timetable for a pullout of the estimated 40,000 Syrian troops in Lebanon.

Syrian-backed Moslem leaders support a continuing role for Syria to protect their position and help guarantee a settlement of Lebanon's civil war.

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