

“Welcome Money”: GDR Citizens Wait in Line in Front of a Branch of Deutsche Bank in Berlin (November 10, 1989)

Abstract

Starting in 1970, every East German citizen who traveled to the Federal Republic of Germany was guaranteed financial support from the West German state budget, so-called welcome money. These payments were made because East Germans with valid exit visas were only allowed to take 70 East German marks with them on their travels; "welcome money" was thus intended to facilitate their entry into the West. The money was normally paid out at city or local government offices upon presentation of an identity card or a passport. On the weekend after the Wall was opened, several million East German citizens made their way to West Germany to visit their relatives, see how people lived, and tour cities and landscapes. The sheer number of visitors strained the system, causing considerable difficulties in the payment of "welcome money." As early as the evening of November 9-10, Berlin mayor Walter Momper ordered banks to pay out "welcome money" to facilitate the process. In Berlin, thousands of East German citizens stood in long lines in front of disbursement points, as this photo shows.

Source



Source: (c) picture-alliance / Sven Simon

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