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(The Mission has no information on the political complexion of the French paper.) "Neues Deutschland" followed up on the story with an editorial article October 21, that criticized West Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt for having decorated Puhl and reiterated the familiar East German charge that the September 13 incident had been carefully staged by West German "forces" opposed to conclusion of a new Berlin pass agreement.

Comment: This forced effort to blacken Sp/4 Puhl and his role in the events of September 13 is a fresh indication of East German sensitivity to incidents at the Berlin Wall and a measure of the regime's concern to offset the unfavorable publicity such incidents call forth. It may be doubted whether such extravagant and undocumented charges as those made against Puhl are likely to carry much conviction on either side of the Wall.

Sp/4 Puhl is still stationed in West Berlin, as the Mission has publicly confirmed in answer to a press query.

For the Minister:

Francis J. Meehan
Chief
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