

April 24, 1961

**Record of a Conversation between N. S. Khrushchev
and FRG Ambassador in the USSR H. Kroll about the
State of Soviet-German Relations and Questions of
the Signing of a Peace Treaty with Germany**

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Summary:

Kroll remarks that trade between the USSR and Western Germany is improving and that he hopes they can continue to trade on good terms. The two discuss the Soviet exhibition in FRG, and Kroll suggests to Khrushchev that the USSR should try and reach an agreement with the GDR soon. Khrushchev also mentions that he will not prevent West German citizens (with FRG passports) to enter FRG from Soviet-controlled Berlin, since population control is too difficult. However, he does mention the possibility of building a wall and quickly says that it would be "impossible".

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Record of a conversation between N. S. Khrushchev and FRG Ambassador in the USSR H. Kroll about the state of Soviet-German relations and questions of the signing of a peace treaty with Germany

24 April 1961

a The title of the document has been partially used.

H. Kroll^b At the instruction of Chancellor Adenauer I pass you cordial greetings and wishes for [good] health. The Chancellor has asked me to pass to you that he is quite interested in you keeping your health and continuing your work as long as possible.

b Underlining by typewriter is used from this point forward.

N. S. Khrushchev I thank [him] for the greetings and good wishes.

H. Kroll I am charged with passing you the Chancellor's response to your message of 17 February³⁵. Today I am passing you a preliminary copy of a letter still not signed by the Chancellor. The original of the letter will be sent later.

I am also charged with passing you the following orally.

In your message you expressed a desire for a friendly and long-term improvement of Soviet-German relations. The Chancellor has instructed me to inform [you] that he also shares this desire, which is supported by the entire German people. This desire is not an empty phrase for us. You know that last year the Chancellor personally favored the signing of a new trade agreement with your country and sought this. In the first three months of this year economic relations between our countries has developed excellently on the basis of this agreement. Among the Western powers the FRG has reached first place in trade with the Soviet Union and has become its important trading partner. On the basis of the development during these three months we draw the conclusion that the trend in our economic relations is on the upswing. The trade volume between our countries during the three months of this year was 25% higher than during the same period last year. Taking this into account, we have made a proposal to the Soviet Union about organizing an FRG industrial exhibition in the USSR next year, and also a Soviet trade exhibition in the FRG. A corresponding FRG delegation was recently in Moscow and held talks with the Chamber of Commerce about the conditions for holding this exhibition. I would like to stress that the decision to hold the trade exhibition was made by Adenauer personally.

You see that in any circumstances we desire to cooperate with you in this field in the future, and on a constructive basis. The same can be said about our relations in the fields of cultural and scientific and technical exchanges. In the near future a Soviet delegation will arrive in Bonn to hold talks about a new agreement on cultural questions, which will then be signed. We have already sent corresponding proposals to the Soviet government envisioning an expansion of the exchange.

Political questions remain. In its memorandum of 17 February the Soviet government made detailed proposals concerning the solution of political questions. This memorandum is considered by the FRG government as the most important document since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries. Consequently, it is being studied in all detail, and its study is still continuing. On the basis of its treaty obligations, in particular, according to Article 2 of the General Treaty, we are obligated to discuss questions concerning Germany and Berlin with our allies. In this connection I would like to direct your attention to the following place in the Chancellor's letter: "Therefore I consider that the solution of problems still not settled between the Soviet Union and Germany in such a spirit which would meet both

generally-accepted international principles as well as the legal interests of both peoples is a joint task and responsibility." This proposal means that we consider it necessary to identify these still unresolved questions together with the Soviet Union. Right now I cannot report in detail the results of the consultations with our allies since they have still not been completed. We favor these discussions being started as soon as possible. As concerns the positions of the other countries, then I can say something, but still not everything. Our impression is such that, besides us, the British government is in favor of such discussions. As regards the French, we have formed the opposite impression. De Gaulle is only interested in Algeria right now³⁶. Regarding the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs I can inform you confidentially that it is obviously set against discussion. The Americans have still not told us their final position. Obviously, the internal development of a position has still not concluded there. They have informed us that they are ready to completely fulfill their responsibilities concerning Berlin, but have not reported whether they favor discussions on the German question, that is, on the question of concluding a peace treaty. Personally, I think that a final decision will depend to a considerable degree on the position of the Americans. In this regard I would consider it advisable for the Soviet government to get in touch with the Americans through Thompson or through your ambassador in Washington.

cThe words "French Ministry of Foreign Affairs" were entered above in ink above the crossed-out words "Quai d'Orsay".

In any event in Bonn they think that discussions are needed with the Soviet government to identify these still unresolved questions and it follows that it is natural to hold them on the basis of mutual proposals.

Several days ago an interesting article about the German question appeared in Izvestiya, at the end of which an important comment was made. In particular, it was said there that peace treaties with the two German states should be concluded in any event, and that if one state refused to conclude such a treaty then it would be concluded with the other. The article also said that all the waiting periods in this question had already passed. I am interested in whether the Soviet government considers that this article needs to be understood such that the waiting period in this question has already expired and that it is ready to conclude a peace treaty with that German state which agrees to it. I would like to note in advance that we do not want to prevent you from concluding a treaty with the GDRd. However, our two countries are posed with a question of how we can best of all come to joint negotiations. Of course, one can think that the conclusion of a peace treaty with the GDR will lead to such negotiations earlier than if it is not concluded. But we do not share this point of view.

d The words "conclude a peace treaty" were underlined with a wavy line of ink.

N. S. Khrushchev That is, negotiations at first, but then a peace treaty?

H. Kroll We think that if the Soviet government concludes a peace treaty with the GDR, inasmuch as it cannot wait any longer, the world will not collapse on account of this, for there won't be a war because of this. But an international crisis will come all the same. It is hard to predict how long it will last. I also don't know how it will affect American-Soviet relations and German-Soviet relations. We think that without such a preliminary conclusion of a peace treaty with the GDR we will in any case seek talks between the USSR and the FRG, and also between the Western powers and the USSR earlier than otherwise. However, right now this article has appeared in Izvestiya, and I am instructed to ask how it is understood from the point of view of the Soviet government.

N. S. Khrushchev Concerning time or substance?

H. Kroll First, of course, the general meaning of this article since it was written seriously, without any superfluous polemics and was perceived with appropriate seriousness. Second, concerning the time of the conclusion of a peace treaty with the GDR inasmuch as there are not yet negotiations between the two German states.

I apologize for the specific nature of this question.

N. S. Khrushchev Good, I will reply then.

H. Kroll I want to add one more comment. I am afraid that if a treaty is concluded with the GDR without delay this will negatively affect the disarmament negotiations between the Western powers and the USSR. I should tell you seriously that in any event this would lead to a considerable acceleration of the atomic weaponry of the FRG. We would regret this since we favor a practical discussion of the problem of disarmament. In his last conversation with Kennedy Adenauer favored this with all urgency and promised all-round support from the FRG. Kennedy, in turn, requested Adenauer submit specific proposals of the German side in the area of disarmament, and we promised to do this.

eThe words "one more comment" were underlined with a wavy line of ink.

N. S. Khrushchev On the question of repatriation I have already given an answer both to you and in a letter to the Chancellor. This question does not exist for us. All Germans, if they are actually German and have German nationality [poddanstvo], can leave the USSR for the GDR or the FRG.

H. Kroll Adenauer took your positive reply, which was also especially appreciated by the FRG political parties and public, with great satisfaction. We, too, do not consider this question especially important. But from the point of view of humanity, this is an important question, and we welcome that the USSR approaches it from a position of humaneness. However, six months have already passed since October of last year and the number of repatriates has practically not increased. I understand that this is a long process, and therefore I am not complaining, but I request this matter be sped up.

I. I. Il'ichev They often petition not for Germans, but for Lithuanians, [who are] Soviet citizens.

N. S. Khrushchev I repeat, all citizens of the FRG desiring to leave can do this. We will not hinder them. If they have not yet left then this does not say we are not letting them go, but that we have no such people. Evidently, we have a different approach here. However, I think that there is no need for experts to meet on this question especially. These questions need to be examined diplomatically. We will permit the exit for all such people if they exist and want to leave.

H. Kroll This question is not politically important to us. But we have sent the USSR MFA more than 2,000 notes covering more than 6,000 German citizens. These notes concern people who undoubtedly are German citizens in the meaning of the 8 April 1958 agreement. The Embassy is ready to present all the necessary documents to clear up this question.

N. S. Khrushchev I am interested in this question and will ask the minister of foreign affairs to devote attention to it. All the people who fall into the category of German citizen will be able to leave. Cde. Gromyko will inform you in the event that there is a different assessment.

H. Kroll I thank you for this promise. The Chancellor will highly appreciate this.

N. S. Khrushchev The next question, is about trade relations and cultural ties with the FRG. We are very satisfied with the development in this area, and I assign a great role in this matter to you and your efforts. We feel that your efforts here are important. Trade relations between our countries are good, and we are ready to develop them. If the political problems are solved, then great possibilities will be opened in the development of trade. The German nation is an artistic [remeslennaya] nation. It does not have great territory^f, but it has good hands and heads - workers, peasants, and intellectuals. Therefore, although the Germans'g space is not great, their standard of living is good. This is the result of their labor^h and intellect.

^f The words "great territory" were entered in ink above the crossed-out words "adequate living space".

^g The word "Germans" was entered in ink above the crossed-out word "us".

^h The word "their" was entered in ink above the crossed-out word "your".

H. Kroll Our living space is international trade.

N. S. Khrushchev This is correct. And the space of the USSR is at your disposal for these purposes. The more international trade develops the wider will be our mutual trade relations.

H. Kroll Our territory was never adequate to feed [our] population from our own land. The attempt to solve this problem by expanding territory twice led to catastrophe. We will not do this a third time. We are convinced that this question can be solved peacefully, by developing trade, and it has already been solved.

N. S. Khrushchev Concerning cultural relations. We have no complaints from our agencies in this regard. These ties are developing well and, obviously, they need to be developed further. There are no obstacles to this. We are trying to develop these relations inasmuch as they are mutually advantageous to our peoples.

But the main thing is the solution of the political question: the conclusion of a peace treaty. I well understand the meaning of the article in Izvestiya to which you refer. This needs to be understood so that we actually think that all the deadlines for the conclusion of a peace treaty have passed. We fought for four ⁱ years, and 16 years have passed since that time, that is, four^j times as long. It is natural that the FRG, Britain, France, and the US are not interested in a peace treaty, and therefore there is none. If this question was of interest to our former allies then a peace treaty would already have been concluded. We have waited a long time, but now this question cannot be put off any longer. One cannot say that time is needed for it to become ripe since this question is already overripe^k. It is clear that there is no desire from the other side. Our side has lost most from this inasmuch as the GDR has been forced to endure limitations on its sovereignty. The Soviet Union does not have direct contiguity with you. The GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia have such direct contiguity. These three countries need to draw a line and a legalization of the results of the War. The peace treaty which we proposed does not provide any changes compared to the results of the War.

ⁱ The words "four years" were entered in ink above the crossed-out words "five years".

^j The word "four" was entered in ink above the crossed out word "three".

^k The sentence was marked off with a vertical line in ink in the left margin of the page.

H. Kroll Unfortunately.

N. S. Khrushchev I understand you. I recently saw a Swedish film "This Should Not Be Repeated"³⁷. This film showed documentary frames about the horrors of the Second World War. But we know all this without films since we were active participants [deystvuyushchie litsa] in this War. The question then was that Hitler planned to destroy the Slavic peoples who, in his words, "multiply like bugs".

H. Kroll Everything you say is true. But why is it necessary to punish the German people for Hitler's deeds? For not all the German people are guilty of them? Even our worst enemies do not assert this.

N. S. Khrushchev It is not an accusation, but a statement. It is history. Hitler said that German space should extend to the Urals. If he had reached the Urals he would not have talked about a peace treaty, but would have simply destroyed us. Stalin said, "Hitlers come and go, but the German people and the state of the Germans remains".

H. Kroll The impression ought not to be created in the German people that a peace treaty with the USSR and other countries will be a repetition of Versailles³⁸ since this would be a poor basis for future friendly and peaceful development.

N. S. Khrushchev I do not at all understand, for a peace treaty cannot change borders right now, this is unrealistic.

H. Kroll We are convinced that a settlement of the questions concerning Germany should in no case be accomplished by war. No means of force should be employed to decide any questions concerning Germany.

N. S. Khrushchev Agreed. Right now a peace treaty only confirms the conditions which developed as a result of the end of the War, and the border markers will not have to be moved. Accordingly, the question of reunification is not at all suitable here since it is an exceptional case. It happens that peoples are separated by other countries as a result of the War, but it happens by their own views. Right now Germany is not divided as a result of military action, but as a result of the fact that domestic development of social forms went in different directions^l. This is a domestic question. We say: [if] you want to reunite with the GDR, there [will be] no obstacles from our side. But you want to absorb the GDR. Cde. Ulbricht would like all Germany to be socialistm.

l The text of the two sentences beginning with the words "It happens that peoples" and ending with "in different directions" was marked off with a vertical line in ink in the left margin of the page.

m The words "all Germany to be socialist" were entered in ink instead of the crossed-out word "back".

H. Kroll This is difficult!

N. S. Khrushchev And not easy for you! Therefore it is necessary to preserve the status quo. But look further yourselves. We sympathize with Cde. Ulbricht, of course, and you don't, since you have different views. We proceed from the real state of affairs. If this question is raised at a peace conference then there is no need to discuss it since each side remains in its own point of view. If you raise this question, we will refuse negotiations. This is not a subject for negotiations at an international conference, it is a German question. And there cannot be interference by the French, Americans, or others here.

West Berlin remains. It is on GDR territory, and its position is abnormal since the sovereign rights of the GDR do not extend to this part of [its] territoryⁿ. This is intolerable. Therefore we thought of how to solve this question. We decided that this needs to be done so as not to exacerbate relations with our former allies and with the FRG. Therefore we do not see any other solution except the creation of a free city in West Berlin. There is no other solution. Of course, this city could be seized. If [we] go Kennedy's way, based on the example of Cuba, he sort of suggests such a solution to us - then we would have seized it. But what would the seizure of Berlin give us?

ⁿ The text of the two sentences beginning with the word "remains" and ending with "this part of [its] territory" was marked off with a vertical line in ink in the left margin of the page.

H. Kroll This [would be] war!

N. S. Khrushchev I assure you, there will be no war. The British and Americans are not such idiots to put 400 million [?at risk?] for two million. However they are blinded by a hatred of Communism they take care of their own skin.

H. Kroll I don't agree with you, for they have given us such clear assurances.

N. S. Khrushchev Put them in [your] pocket! The time has passed to frighten. But if they want war, then they will get it. But it is not we, but they, who will start it. However^o, we have no intention of seizing West Berlin, and are proposing to turn it into a free city.

^o The word "However" was entered in ink above the crossed-out word "but".

We will conclude a peace treaty with the GDR. If our former allies do not support us, then the status of a free city will be established unilaterally. There will be no blockade; full ties with West Berlin will be maintained, except military [ones]. The GDR will receive its sovereign rights and build relations with the free city on this basis. But if the Western countries frighten us with a war, we will bring our armed forces into combat readiness before the signing of the peace treaty. It is not secret that when I went to Paris for the summit conference the US brought its army into combat readiness, and we also issued corresponding orders^p. We know that right now the US has brought its troops in the FRG into combat readiness. We also have done this in the GDR, Poland, and in other places. All this is being done without an announcement. The Americans issued such an order on 14 April, and we also issued an order.

^p The words "also issued corresponding orders" were entered in ink under the line instead of the crossed-out word "also".

So we will sign a peace treaty. But all the same we would like to come to agreement. If you are thinking of starting negotiations and drawing up them out for about 10 years, then we will not do this. The question of a peace treaty is so clear right now that it won't work to drag out negotiations. We would think that they are not dealing with us seriously.

I would like to ask you a question: when is more to Adenauer's advantage for us to conclude a peace treaty - before the elections to the Bundestag or after? It's all the same to us. I personally even think that it is more to our advantage for Adenauer to win the elections since it is easier to come to agreement with him. He is a man of his word.

H. Kroll He will win the election.

N. S. Khrushchev This will not upset us.

H. Kroll And this would be better for our relations.

N. S. Khrushchev I don't know, better or worse, since, first, I don't know who Brandt is and, second, our relations right now are not important and there would be significant fluctuations in them. But I think that the Chancellor will be bolder in solving questions than Brandt.

In the near future we will make a proposal to convene a peace conference. This is the formal side, since the Western powers won't agree to this, and then we will sign a treaty with the GDR. We could have signed a peace treaty even in the first months of this year, but we haven't done this, since we did not want to create the impression in world public opinion that we had chosen a time to drive a wedge between two presidents to sign a treaty. We don't want to give the appearance that we are striving to force [vyrvat'] the peace treaty. We decided to give the President time to get comfortable in his White House so he doesn't say that he could not familiarize himself with the situation and conclude a treaty. The truth is, this is a naïve explanation, since the War ended 16 years ago, and right now it is impossible to go to elections as a candidate for president without understanding the German question.

H. Kroll You said that the proposal for a world [vseobshchaya] peace conference will be made in the near future. What is meant by "near future"? Possibly, it is an immodest question?

N. S. Khrushchev Of course, I cannot tell you exactly right now, however the near future is not days, but months.

What do we expect as a result of signing a peace treaty? If the allies and Germans do not sign the peace treaty in a good way, it means they seek an aggravation [of relations]. This is clear, since one side can always create an aggravation. What does this mean? It's 50-50 that these countries will cut off trade with us. We are ready for this. What will they get from this? I think that the loss for them will be greater than the gain. What else can be foreseen? Some countries might break diplomatic relations with us. This won't cause us any harm, for this is not 43 years ago when no one wanted to recognize us. A rupture of economic relation will cause these countries more harm than to us.

I tell you all this to show that we have thought out this question.

The third degree of tension is war. I rule this out [isklyuchat']. For it is necessary to rouse the people to fight. If we went to war ourselves, whether you like it or not, defend yourselves. We are not declaring war with this action, but are drawing a line under war. What importance can it have for the Americans and the other Western countries not to allow West Berlin to become a free city?

In the article which was published in Izvestiya that you mentioned it said that we agree with the sentence of the communiqué of Adenauer and Kennedy about "preservation of the freedom of West Berlin". We subscribe to this. We understand it this way: to preserve the current social system which the people of the city want themselves.

We also favor the broad ties of this city with the outside world. But the ties of this free city will be accomplished within the framework of the sovereignty of the GDR. If I

were in Cde. Ulbricht's place I would have not already agreed to aircraft flights, for it is necessary to turn around over Berlin in order to land. Right now all civilized countries are building airfields outside the cities. But in Berlin there is a situation where an aircraft circled overhead in order to drown out my words even when I was speaking there at a rally. Aerial communications ought to be accomplished through a GDR airfield. It needs to be frankly said: in order to control entry and exit, since a sovereign country cannot live without knowing who is coming into it and what they are bringing in, it cannot live with open gates.

But the Germans, Cde. Ulbricht, will say all this. So, communications by rail, water, and air, but through GDR control. Otherwise a fortress wall around West Berlin or some special regime will have to be established. This is impossible, since a single economy exists in Berlin, the residents of Berlin work in various parts of the city, have relatives, etc.

H. Kroll You asked what is better: to submit a proposal for a world peace conference before or after the elections to the Bundestag. I think that, from the point of view of the elections, it is all the same to the Chancellor when this proposal is submitted since he will win the elections anyway. But from the point of view of the negotiations which we desire to hold, it would be more correct to make such a proposal after the elections since after victory Adenauer will have more time and, in addition, he will be able to plan his policy for the next four years. I think it is possible to confidentially inform you, although I have not been given such instructions, that when we saw Adenauer the last time in Bonn, he told me that after the elections he plans to deal with Soviet-German relations personally, since he considers it necessary to clear up our mutual questions. Therefore, it would be correct to submit the proposal about a peace conference after the elections. Consequently, I allow myself to again direct your attention to that phrase in the Chancellor's letter which I mentioned at the beginning.

N. S. Khrushchev I agree. Maybe you're right. Possibly it's advisable to do this after the elections to the Bundestag. They are to be held on 17 September and we have a Party congress scheduled for 17 October. Possibly it's better to do this after the renewal of the [deputies'] credentials [mandate].

I would like to touch on one more question which you raised. You said that if the peace treaty is signed the Bundeswehr would get atomic weapons. We would like to destroy even our own atomic weapons. However, the atomic weaponry of the Bundeswehr will not restrain us. As is well-known, the total does not change from changing the places of the terms. So many of these atomic weapons are made in America and among us right now and if part of them fall into the hands of the FRG that the situation does not substantially change from this. This is not a barrier to signing a peace treaty. I read that if we and you do not come to agreement then we will sign the peace treaty without an agreement. This might set our relations back. But time will pass, the ocean will enter its shores, and relations will again improve. After the conclusion of the peace treaty Poland would be calm since its borders would be guaranteed. The GDR would also be satisfied. As concerns Czechoslovakia, its border with the GDR would be guaranteed, and the part of its border with you would not be guaranteed, but let this serve for you as a condition of aggravation. With the passage of time the FRG will agree with this post factum and possibly will be forced to legally endorse [this]. If not, then we will regret this. These are our views.

o The word "substantially" was entered in ink above the line.

If we do not sign the peace treaty right now then this question will arise in a year or two anyway. This barrier or tension needs to be passed sometime. I think that it will be done this year. The truth is, we have not named a deadline right now, neither in the government nor in the socialist countries. This deadline has still not been set. I

am expressing only my own views right now. But I think that this ought not be dragged out any further. I think that it is better to do it this year.

H. Kroll Permit me to express a couple of comments. First of all, I thank you for the frankness. However, I think that once we have waited 16 years, then right now it is not a matter of two months.

N. S. Khrushchev This is right.

H. Kroll I am an optimist and therefore I think that if we leave ourselves two more months then the possibility of an agreement on this question will be maintained. A relaxation might be achieved by general disarmament, which would exert a positive influence on the German question.

N. S. Khrushchev I am a pessimist as concerns disarmament. The Americans are afraid of disarmament since they fear an economic downturn. Kennedy himself told Gromyko that senators are pressuring him, demanding an increase in the appropriations for weapons. They have fallen into a vicious circle. The Germans are making very good use of this and beating them on the market.

H. Kroll But why during secret negotiations with Adenauer would Kennedy demand proposals on disarmament from him?

N. S. Khrushchev But why do they drag [this] out and raise conditions? We have said that we are ready for any monitoring in conditions of general disarmament. But they do not want disarmament, they advocate the monitoring of weapons. We don't agree to this. We agree to partial disarmament. For example, for foreign troops to be withdrawn from Hungary, Poland, and the FRG. Or for equal zones of partial disarmament to be created. They are proposing a zone of 100 km for themselves, but of 1000 km for us. But there are no fools [here] right now! They want a zone to the Urals. If they agree to disarmament then perhaps we'll let them everywhere.

p Then the sentence "They are proposing gradual disarmament under monitoring, but this means only monitoring" is struck out in ink.

q The word "this" was entered above over the words "gradual disarmament" crossed-out in ink.

If the Chancellor finds courage and agrees to a treaty with us, then Germany would only profit.

H. Kroll Tell him yourself, you will convince him.

N. S. Khrushchev For this, it's first necessary to meet. In addition, he is an intelligent man, he will look into it himself.

H. Kroll I think that you can meet.

N. S. Khrushchev I think that if an agreement with you is achieved, then we will pass the stage of aggravation.

H. Kroll In the memorandum you indicated that you were ready to hear out the counterproposals of Germany and the Western powers. But when I hear you right now I form the impression that you are not thinking of this, but primarily about a peace

treaty on the basis of your own proposals.

N. S. Khrushchev We submitted our proposals almost three years ago, but have not yet received a reply. We sent a memorandum to the Chancellor two months ago, but there is still no answer. They don't want to talk with us, but want to draw [us] into discussions.

H. Kroll But this is still not decided. It is hard to talk with the allies.

N. S. Khrushchev If they don't want to, of course it is difficult. One can talk this way for 10 years.

H. Kroll I have already told you that the British are in favor of negotiations, and also about the situation with the other allies. But, of course, these negotiations should be held on the basis of mutual proposals.

N. S. Khrushchev Eisenhower was for this. Macmillan was more firmly for this. When I met with De Gaulle, I understood him such that France would not display initiative on this question, but he also would not object.

H. Kroll That is a correct analysis.

N. S. Khrushchev When I asked De Gaulle how are things to be with the peace treaty, he looked at me, for he is a taciturn person, and then said: "But who can prohibit you from doing this?" I tell you all this confidentially, because I trust you.

H. Kroll I value this trust. I would like to ask you the following. We intend to publish this letter of the Chancellor since all the previous correspondence has been published in Germany [u nas].

N. S. Khrushchev I have no objection.

If Hitler had not come to war after the Peace of Versailles we would have had the best relations. The Treaty of Rapallo was very advantageous to both sides and was not directed against others 39.

If you advocate reunification right now, etc. then it will be possible to talk for about 100 years. When we had a revolution the Germans seized Ukraine, but Lenin then agreed to remain without Ukraine in order to preserve our social system. If you want to change the situation, try peaceful competition.

H. Kroll We are not fools [several words off the page] reunification right now is impossible and so it will be for a very long time. But we cannot throw away the right to reunification. As a German, I cannot abandon reunification, of course, on a rational and realistic political basis.

N. S. Khrushchev We do not deny the legality of the aspirations of the German people for reunification. But this is a question which the Germansp themselves will decide. I told the Americans: if, as you thinkq, the capitalist system is more progressive, then you will beat us. Let's leave this to history. We will not decide this question by voting. Let's build relations with a recognition of the fact that socialist and capitalist powers exist. What do you lose by signing the treaty? Nothing.

p The text from the beginning of the paragraph and ending with the words "the

Germans themselves will decide" was marked off in ink in the left margin of the page.
q The words "as you think" were entered in ink above the line.

H. Kroll Various things: to abandon a forcible change of the status quo, which we solemnly declared, or to recognize the current condition legally. There is a big difference between them. This is psychologically difficult for the German people. No one can force us to [do] this. Please understand us.

N. S. Khrushchev I understand you. Obviously, we need to employ symbolic force here. This will happen when we sign the peace treaty, crossing this line. Then it will be clear that it this not your initiative.

H. Kroll But it is impossible without concessions.

N. S. Khrushchev But what will I concede? The Urals?

H. Kroll We will uphold our right to reunification.

N. S. Khrushchev We recognize this right.

H. Kroll If two German states come to agreement about reunification with your aid, then the question about a military threat to Europe is removed.

N. S. Khrushchev I cannot promise you anything since I would be deceiving myself. The issue here is of sociopolitical questions, and not national ones. We ourselves waged a Civil War for four years to change the social system. Therefore we cannot help you. Our sympathies are on the side of the GDR.

H. Kroll You and I will not solve this question today, but there is an opportunity for the two different German states to find ways for closer relations and cooperation while preserving their social systems. It was already like this in previous times in Germany.

N. S. Khrushchev I am for this, for Cde. Ulbricht has already proposed a confederation.

H. Kroll This could be called a confederation or something else. If only Ulbricht had good will.

N. S. Khrushchev But you're against [this].

H. Kroll Today this is so, but tomorrow otherwise.

The conversation lasted two hours. During the lunch held after the conversation Cde. N. S. Khrushchev asked to pass Chancellor Adenauer an invitation to come to the Soviet Union to vacation. H. Kroll expressed gratitude and promised to pass the invitation to the Chancellor.

the conversation was recorded by V. Koptel'tsev.

Memo: "The conversation was held at the dacha in Pitsunda. Shuysky"

Note: "Distributed".

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