

June 1961

Letter from Ulbricht to Khrushchev

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Summary:

Ulbricht writes to Khrushchev discussing a peace treaty with Western powers. He mentions that the Bonn government threatens to repeal its trade treaty with the GDR if the peace treaty is concluded with both German states, and the economic problem this would pose for the GDR.

Credits:

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Contents:

Translation - English

Dear Comrade Nikita Sergeevich!

Through the Extraordinary Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Soviet Union in the German Democratic Republic, Comrade Pervukhin, I have already let you know that we fully agree with the memorandum of the Soviet government, which you gave to President Kennedy. In a joint session of the SED CC, the Council of State, the Council of Ministers and the Presidium of the National Council of the National Front of democratic Germany, a corresponding resolution was made.

In the meantime I have received from you the information material on your conversation in Vienna with President Kennedy. You represented excellently not only the standpoint of the CPSU and the Soviet government, but also that of the states of the socialist camp on the basis of the joint declaration of the communist and workers' parties. This was a great political accomplishment, which served the goal of achieving a resolution of the existing unresolved issues in a peaceful way through negotiations. We warmly thank you for your initiative in the matter of the peace treaty.

After it became clear to the Western powers from their discussions with the West German Ambassador Kroll and Mr. Lippmann that the conclusion of a peace treaty with both German states is on the agenda and cannot be postponed any more, a stronger revanchist propaganda by the Bonn government has set in. The Bonn Economics Minister Erhard threatened the repeal of the trade treaty with the GDR in the event of the conclusion of a peace treaty. The GDR would then be a foreign state, which would have to pay for its daily purchases in West Germany in foreign currency.

In the neutral countries, the Bonn government is strengthening its pressure on the governments to decrease the rights of our consulates and trade agencies.

Lastly, it even tried to prevent the participation of the German Gymnastics and Sports Club in the Olympic games. Adenauer categorically stated that the Federal Republic is the German state and on this basis no sports competition of GDR teams can occur in which the national flag or coat of arms of the GDR is displayed.

It is also important through the joint efforts of all socialist countries to further discredit even more German revanchism and militarism, to explain even more in the Western countries the meaning of the peace treaty, and at the same time to thoroughly prepare the conclusion of a peace treaty in the countries of the Warsaw Treaty states.

Comrade Pervukhin informed us here that you would find it useful if a consultation of the first secretaries of the communist and workers' parties of the countries of the Warsaw Pact would take place as soon as possible. The SED CC will appeal therefore to the first secretaries of the Polish United Workers' Party, the Communist Party of the Czechoslovakian Republic, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the Rumanian Workers' Party, and the Communist Party of Bulgaria with the proposal of having a consultation in Moscow on July 20 and 21, 1961, about the preparation of a peace treaty. The goal of this meeting should be an agreement on the political, diplomatic, economic and organizational preparations and also measures for the coordination of radio and press agitation.

We will ask the first secretaries to give their view on this proposal. In case some of the comrades desire a different time, a corresponding agreement must ensue.

As enclosures, I send you material "On the Creation of Offices of Employment and Career Consultation" and material "On Measures Against Grenzgangers." [Berliners who regularly crossed city borders for work] As regards the creation of Offices of

Employment, they are necessary in the entire Republic including the capital, since the shortfall of the labor force is increasing, and also career advising and employment provision for young people is not covered. There were employment offices in Germany earlier, the majority of which we broke up. But we are now in the position where we must again create the employment offices. Since this is an important political issue, we ask your opinion.

The Politburo has occupied itself thoroughly with the grenzganger issue in Berlin. Since this is an important political question, which is connected with the peace treaty and the resolution of the West Berlin issue, we are sending you our considerations. I draw your attention to the fact that this proposal should be handled very confidentially and also will not be dealt with in our central party apparatus. It deals with the fact that a growing number of citizens of the GDR capital work in West Berlin. Due to the exchange rate alone, they multiply their income three or four times as long as they work in West Berlin. Since we cannot expect that in connection with the conclusion of a peace treaty an understanding will be reached between the West Berlin senate and the GDR government on the exchange rate, economic measures are necessary to protect the capital of the GDR from more losses and demoralizing. There is also the issue, first: Which economic measures are the most advisable and second: When is the most favorable time? If it is politically necessary, we must postpone the matter until after the conclusion of a peace treaty, but this will create great difficulties for us in the next half year.

We ask your opinion on these questions.

In the next days the Politburo of our party will work on the draft of our proposal to the Bonn government on joint negotiations and the draft of an appeal by the Volkskammer to the West German population.

The CC of our party will take its stand on the peace treaty on July 3 and 4, 1961, and the Volkskammer meets on July 6, 1961.

We warmly thank the CPSU CC Presidium and you, dear friend, for the great efforts which you are undertaking for the achievement of a peace treaty and the resolution of the West Berlin issue.

Enclosures