

# New Evidence on the Berlin Crisis 1958-1962

## Khrushchev's November 1958 Berlin Ultimatum: New Evidence from the Polish Archives

### Introduction, translation, and annotation by Douglas Selvage<sup>1</sup>

It was on 10 November 1958, at a Soviet-Polish friendship rally to cap off the visit of Polish leader Władysław Gomułka to Moscow, that Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev first publicly announced his intention to turn over the Soviet Union's control functions in Berlin to the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Khrushchev's speech was the prelude to his letter of November 27 to the Western powers, in which he demanded that they enter into negotiations for a German peace treaty and on the issue of transforming West Berlin into a demilitarized, "free" city. If sufficient progress were not made within six months, Khrushchev threatened to sign a separate peace treaty with the GDR and to grant it control over the transit routes to Berlin.<sup>2</sup>

Recently-declassified minutes of a meeting between Gomułka and Khrushchev on November 10, the day of the Soviet leader's speech, shed light on the immediate prelude to the ultimatum of November 27. They tend to confirm Hope Harrison and Vladislav Zubok's main assertions in their recent studies about Khrushchev's goals in provoking the crisis: to differentiate himself from his ousted opponents, to counter the Federal Republic of Germany's (FRG) expanding role in NATO, and—above all else—to gain international recognition of the GDR.<sup>3</sup> The minutes highlight in particular the key role of the shifting nuclear balance in Khrushchev's thinking and provide insight into the evolving relationship between Khrushchev and Gomułka.

#### Khrushchev's Goals

On the weekend of 8 November 1958, Gomułka received a draft of Khrushchev's proposed speech for the friendship rally on Monday. He was reportedly shocked. Although the GDR and the Soviet Union had sent notes to the Federal Republic and the Western powers in September calling for a German peace treaty and inter-German talks on reunification, there had been no mention of Berlin. Only days before had the Polish foreign minister, Adam Rapacki, renewed his proposal for a nuclear weapon-free zone in Central Europe to embrace both German states, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.<sup>4</sup> The underlying goals of the initiative, the "Rapacki Plan," were to prevent West German access to nuclear weapons and to provide the basis for *détente* and disarmament in Europe. A relaxation of tensions between the two blocs would have allowed Poland more room for maneuver in its

domestic and foreign policies, especially with regard to trade and cultural relations with the West.<sup>5</sup> In contrast, Khrushchev's Berlin gambit presaged an increase in tensions between East and West. Although it might have been aimed indirectly at preventing West German access to nuclear weapons, the central goal was to gain Western recognition of the GDR.<sup>6</sup> Khrushchev's Berlin ultimatum meant, in effect, that the struggle within the Eastern bloc between Poland and the GDR over what was to come first in Soviet-bloc foreign policy—regional disarmament or recognition of the GDR—had been decided in the East Germans' favor.<sup>7</sup>

In the session on November 10, Gomułka let Khrushchev do the talking. When the Soviet leader asked Gomułka if he had read Moscow's latest "suggestions" regarding Berlin, he said that he had. "We understand," Gomułka said, "that they are aimed towards liquidating the western part of Berlin." Khrushchev quickly countered, "It is not that simple." The announcement on Berlin was only the "beginning of the struggle." Moscow intended to hand over its control functions in Berlin to the East Germans, and this would force the West to speak directly with the GDR—leading, in effect, to its recognition. The Soviet leader also suggested other possible reasons for his gambit. He tried to differentiate himself from his former opponents in the struggle to succeed Stalin by citing their policy towards the German question. Both KGB Chief Lavrentii Beria and the Soviet's Communist Party Central Committee Secretary Georgi Malenkov, Khrushchev declared, had favored a Soviet withdrawal from Berlin and the GDR in 1953.<sup>8</sup> In the same year, Khrushchev had justified Beria's removal and execution by pointing to his German policy. Similarly, in June 1957, he had vindicated his purge of the "anti-party group" of Malenkov, Vyacheslav Molotov, and Lazar Kaganovich from the Soviet leadership by citing their opposition to credits for the GDR.<sup>9</sup> To help assure Gomułka's support, Khrushchev now alleged that his former opponents had even wanted to alter Poland's western border, the Oder-Neisse Line. Having differentiated himself from his opponents, he also brought up the issue of the FRG's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), an alliance "clearly directed against us." Bonn's membership in NATO, he declared, violated the Potsdam Agreement. It thus provided Moscow with a justification to renounce the existing arrangements for Berlin, agreed

upon at Potsdam, especially since the West was using West Berlin as an “attack base” against the Soviet Union.

### **Nuclear Brinkmanship and the West’s Reaction**

Khrushchev sought to calm the Polish delegation’s fears about the possibility of war over Berlin by underlining the altered strategic balance since 1953. The West would not risk a war over Berlin, he suggested, because the Soviet Union had the hydrogen bomb and the means to hit the U.S. As Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov point out, Khrushchev believed that the Soviet threat to use nuclear weapons during the Suez Crisis exactly two years earlier had played a crucial role in forcing Great Britain and France to back down. His “nuclear-missile romanticism”<sup>10</sup> also led him to believe that in order to avoid nuclear confrontation, the Western powers would have to acquiesce in East German control over the transit routes to Berlin. (In his meeting with Gomułka, Khrushchev did not mention the possibility of a negotiated settlement with the West over Berlin or a peace treaty.) “If a conflict results,” Khrushchev told Gomułka, “they [the West] know full well that we are in a position to raze West Germany to the ground. The first minutes of war will decide.... Their territory is small—West Germany, England, France—literally several bombs will suffice...” Although a war “might drag on for years,” the Soviet Union could also launch a nuclear strike against the U.S. “Today, America has moved closer to us,” Khrushchev told Gomułka, “our missiles can hit them directly.”

Since war was no longer a possibility for the West, Khrushchev predicted, they would resort to some form of economic blockade against the GDR and Berlin. This time, however, unlike 1948-49, it would be the Soviet Union that would provide the residents of West Berlin with food. Since France and Great Britain—Khrushchev and Gomułka agreed—did not really favor German unification, they would not necessarily put up much resistance. Indeed, Khrushchev predicted—falsely—that French President Charles de Gaulle would not actively support West Germany during a crisis over Berlin.<sup>11</sup> De Gaulle, he said, feared the Germans; if they attacked any country in the future, it would be France, not the Soviet Union. “De Gaulle,” Khrushchev adjudged, “is a realist, a military man; he completely understands the danger to France.”

Khrushchev, it seems, had not yet decided to leave open the possibility of a negotiated settlement with the Western powers over Berlin. When Gomułka brought up the option of talks with the West, Khrushchev replied that Moscow was not planning a diplomatic approach to the Western powers. It would simply withdraw its representative from the Allied Control Commission, recall its military commander from Berlin, and hand over control of the access routes to the East Germans. By the time of his “ultimatum” on November 27, however, Khrushchev decided to leave open the possibility of a negotiated

settlement on Berlin and a peace treaty, so as long as sufficient progress was made within six months.<sup>12</sup> He rescinded and renewed the deadline two more times before he finally abandoned it in October 1961, two months after the construction of the Berlin Wall.

### **The Polish-Soviet Relationship**

The minutes also provide insight into the evolving relationship between Khrushchev and Gomułka. Only two years before, in October 1956, Khrushchev had flown to Warsaw on the eve of the Polish United Workers’ Party [PUWP]’s 8<sup>th</sup> Plenum to confront the Polish leadership about Gomułka’s return to power.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, in November 1958, he talked openly with Gomułka about the ostensible differences within the Soviet leadership over Poland’s western border, the Oder-Neisse Line. Not surprisingly, he suggested that he, Khrushchev, had always supported the Oder-Neisse Line and it was others—Beria and the “feeble” Malenkov—who had committed the “stupidity” of refusing to recognize it. Khrushchev’s statement was particularly ironic because it was he who made veiled threats against the Oder-Neisse Line in two meetings with Gomułka in 1957. At the first meeting, in May 1957 in Moscow, Khrushchev had used the border issue to force Gomułka to renounce his demands for compensation for Moscow’s economic exploitation of Poland during the Stalin era.<sup>14</sup> At the second meeting, in August 1957, he had pressured Gomułka to curb the reforms in Poland and combat “anti-Sovietism.”<sup>15</sup> Gomułka had responded in October 1957 with a crackdown in Poland. He had ordered the closure of the Warsaw student newspaper, *Po prostu*, the leading organ of the Polish reform movement.<sup>16</sup> When students protested the decision, they were brutally rebuffed by Poland’s internal security forces. Then, in November 1957, Gomułka had ordered a purge (“review”) of the PUWP’s membership, which led to the dismissal of leading “revisionists.”<sup>17</sup> By the time of his meeting with Khrushchev in November 1958, Gomułka publicly supported Khrushchev’s Berlin gambit, despite his private reservations. In return, the Soviet leader sanctioned—both in his speech on November 10 and more importantly, during a visit to Poland in July 1959—Poland’s right to follow its own path to socialism.<sup>18</sup>

The excerpt below comes from the former Polish party archives, now a part of *Archiwum Akt Nowych* (AAN), or the Archive for Contemporary Documents, in Warsaw.<sup>19</sup>

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### **Minutes from the Discussion between the Delegation of the PRL [People’s Republic of Poland] and the Government of the USSR,” 25 October - 10 November 1958**

[Excerpt from session on 10 November 1958.]

**Khrushchev:** He turns to the German question and quotes the recent statement of [U.S. Secretary of State John Foster]

Dulles on the matter of Berlin.<sup>20</sup>

If a conflict results, they know full well that we are in a position to raze West Germany to the ground. The first minutes of war will decide. There the losses will naturally be the greatest. After that, the war might drag on for years. Their territory is small—West Germany, England, France—literally several bombs will suffice, they will decide in the first minutes of the war. We recently conducted tests, and we have such [delivery] vehicles that at the same strength they use ten times less fuel, so in the same space we can produce ten times as many bombs.

There were some among us who believed that we would have to withdraw from Berlin. Beria proposed this, and he was supported by “feeble” Malenkov. They believed that we should give up the GDR and Berlin. That was in 1953. What would we have accomplished after that? They did not even recognize the border on the Oder and Neisse, so that would have been complete stupidity. They would not have even recognized the Western border of Poland, but had pretensions to Gdynia and Gdańsk. We have to defend the border on the Elbe. Are we supposed to give up a population of 18 million in the GDR for nothing, without a fight? That’s stupidity. We should fully support Ulbricht and Grotewohl. The FRG simply offered us gold, dollars, so that we would not support the GDR. They simply asked - how much do you want [?] Of course we rejected this, we do not negotiate on such questions.

You know about our latest suggestions with regard to Berlin.

**Gomułka:** We know. We understand that they are aimed towards liquidating the western part of Berlin.

**Khrushchev:** It is not that simple. I am only announcing that matter. That is the beginning of the struggle. Our announcement in our presentations is only the beginning of the action. Undoubtedly it is an exacerbation. The GDR will aggravate the issue of transport, especially military, and they will have to turn to them on matters of transport. Of course an exacerbation will result.

**Gomułka:** It is understood that in the longer term a situation cannot continue in which in the interior of one state, the GDR, stands another state—West Berlin. It would be different if the unification of Germany were a close prospect—and that was possible at the time of Potsdam, when it was considered a temporary status—until the unification of Germany. But currently the situation is different and such a prospect is lacking. Such a state of things cannot be maintained. There is not even a single state in the West that would support the unification of Germany. Even France and England do not wish that upon themselves.

**Khrushchev:** And France and England are afraid themselves of whether we might not give in on this issue. In 1956, they were full of happiness, they thought that Poland had perished as a socialist state. They were mistaken, but even if it had come to pass, even if we had

had some difficulties in Poland, it would not have saved them. We would have gone through Czechoslovakia, through the Baltic Sea, but we would have never withdrawn from the GDR. We would not allow the GDR to be swallowed up.

**Gomułka:** Do you intend to address the three states [i.e., Western powers] about liquidating the status of Berlin?

**Khrushchev:** No. My declaration today should be understood in such a fashion, that we are unilaterally ceasing to observe the agreement on Berlin’s status, that we are discontinuing to fulfill the functions deriving from our participation in the Control Commission. Next, we will recall our military commander in West Berlin and our [military] mission. [East German Premier Otto] Grotewohl will ask the English and Americans to leave, along with their missions. Our military, however, will remain in the GDR on the basis of our participation in the Warsaw Treaty. Then the capitalist states will have to turn to the GDR on matters relating to Berlin, transit, and transport. They will have to turn to Grotewohl, and he is firm. And that’s when the tension begins. Some form of blockade will result, but we have enough foodstuffs. We will also have to feed West Berlin. We do not want to, but the population will suffer from it.

**Ignar:**<sup>21</sup> That political stance is of course right, as long as you say that it will not cause a war. If not, then it is correct and I, in any case, think so.

**Khrushchev:** War will not result from it. There will be tensions, of course, there will be a blockade. They might test to see our reaction. In any case we will have to show a great deal of cold blood in this matter.

**Gomułka:** They might try different forms of blockade. That might play a part in the summit meeting.

**Khrushchev:** According to the Potsdam agreement, the FRG should not join any alliance against the countries with which Germany fought. But they joined NATO, which is clearly directed against us. That is clearly in conflict with the Potsdam agreement. West Berlin is there to be used as an attack base against us. They are turning to blackmail. Five years ago—that was different. Then, we did not have the hydrogen bomb; now, the balance of forces is different. Then, we could not reach the USA. The USA built its policies upon the bases surrounding us. Today, America has moved closer to us—our missiles can hit them directly.

**Gomułka:** What about de Gaulle?

**Khrushchev:** He will not actively support them. De Gaulle fears the Germans. During a meeting in Moscow with the French (Guy Mollet), we said to them: Why would the Germans attack to the east? There they will meet the greatest resistance, there it will be difficult for them. Hence, they will certainly attack to the west. De Gaulle understands that if the Germans start looking for weak spots they will attack France, because if they want to attack the USSR, they will have to go through Poland. De Gaulle is a realist, a military man, he understands

completely the danger to France.

On the matters relating to West Berlin, we consulted with the comrades from the GDR. They fully support these steps.

**Gomułka:** We have our trade agreements with the FRG. We ship goods to West Berlin.

**Khrushchev:** You can keep those agreements, but you should speak with the GDR about transport. The GDR also trades with them. They supply them with briquettes, and they receive coke, which they give to Poland....

[Source: AAN, KC PZPR, p. 113, t. 27. Translated by Douglas Selvage]

Douglas Selvage recently submitted his dissertation, 'Poland, the German Democratic Republic and the German Question, 1955-1967,' at Yale University and will be receiving his Ph.D. in December.

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<sup>2</sup> See the general background in Hope M. Harrison, "New Evidence on Khrushchev's 1958 Berlin Ultimatum," *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin* 4 (Fall 1994), 35-36.

<sup>3</sup> Hope Harrison, *CWIHP Working Paper No.5: Ulbricht and the Concrete 'Rose': New Archival Evidence on the Dynamics of Soviet-East German Relations and the Berlin Crisis, 1958-61*, (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May 1993), 12-16; Vladislav Zubok, *CWIHP Working Paper No.6: Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis (1958-62)*, (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May 1993), 3-9. On the role of the domestic power struggle in the Soviet Union, also see Robert Slusser, *The Berlin Crisis of 1961: Soviet-American Relations and the Struggle for Power in the Kremlin, June - November 1961* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), *passim*.

<sup>4</sup> Hansjakob Stehle, *The Independent Satellite: Society and Politics in Poland Since 1945*, transl. D.J.S. Thompson (New York: Frederick A. Praeger Publishers, 1965), 38-40. On the East German and Soviet notes from September, see Harrison, *Ulbricht and the Concrete 'Rose'*, 8-12.

<sup>5</sup> On the Rapacki Plan, see Stehle, *Independent Satellite*, 230-37; and the most recent study, which makes use of Polish archives: Piotr Wandycz, "Adam Rapacki and the Search for European Security," Gordon A. Craig and Francis L. Loewenheim eds., in *The Diplomats, 1939-1979* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), 289-317.

<sup>6</sup> Hope Harrison, "The Bargaining Power of Weaker Allies in Bipolarity and Crisis: The Dynamics of Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-1961," (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1993), 144.

<sup>7</sup> When Poland first announced the Rapacki Plan in October 1957, the East Germans had responded with their own proposal,

the "Grotewohl Plan." The major difference between the two initiatives had been the GDR's insistence that the two German states first sign an agreement on their own, which would have signified Bonn's recognition of the GDR. The Poles, in contrast, had been willing to settle for a series of unilateral declarations by Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the two German states not to permit the stationing of nuclear weapons on their territory—a solution that would not have forced Bonn to recognize the GDR. Stehle, *Independent Satellite*, 225-26. On GDR interference with the Rapacki Plan see, e.g., Dept. IV, MSZ, "Notatka," 28 February 1958, and MSZ, "Wyciąg z raportu politycznego Ambasady Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej w Berlinie za okres od 1.IX.1957 r. do 28.II.1958 r.," n.d., both in AAN, KC PZPR, p. 110, t. 17.

<sup>8</sup> On the 1953 events, see Christian F. Ostermann, "This Is Not A Politburo But A Madhouse," *CWIHP Bulletin* 10 (March 1998), pp. 61-72.

<sup>9</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 131; Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 197-98.

<sup>10</sup> Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, 190-94.

<sup>11</sup> Among the Western powers, De Gaulle's France, it turned out, took "the most uncompromising line" towards Khrushchev's ultimatum. Ann Tusa, *The Last Division: A History of Berlin, 1945-1989* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1997), 117.

<sup>12</sup> Harrison, "New Evidence," 35-36.

<sup>13</sup> On the confrontation in Warsaw, see L.W. Głuchowski, "Poland, 1956: Khrushchev, Gomułka, and the 'Polish October,'" *CWIHP Bulletin* 5 (Spring 1995), 1, 38-49.

<sup>14</sup> Andrzej Korzon, "Rozmowy polsko-radzieckie w maju 1957 roku," *Dzieje najnowsze* 25 (1993), 121-30.

<sup>15</sup> Andrzej Werblan, "Nieznana rozmowa Władysława Gomułka z Nikitą S. Chruszczowem," *Dziś* 4 (May 1993), 75-84, esp. 82.

<sup>16</sup> In an address to party journalists in November 1957, Gomułka justified the closing of *Po Prostu* by pointing to Poland's geopolitical situation. He stressed the need to combat anti-Sovietism in Poland; otherwise, given the Germans' revisionist aims, Poland would become a truncated "Duchy of Warsaw." "Słowo końcowe tow. Wiesława na spotkaniu z dziennikarzami dnia 5.X. 57," 5 October 1957, in AAN, KC PZPR, 237/V-255.

<sup>17</sup> Andrzej Albert [Wojciech Roszkowski], *Najnowsza historia Polski, 1914-1993*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., vol.2 (London: Puls Publications, 1994), 368-71.

<sup>18</sup> Stehle, *Independent Satellite*, 39-42.

<sup>19</sup> A Polish transcript of the talks from October 11 to November 11, 1958, has recently been published in *Tajne dokumenty Biura Politycznego: PRL-ZSSR 1956-1970*, introduction by Andrzej Paczkowski (London: "Aneks," 1998), 191-120. The relevant section can be found on pp. 112-14.

<sup>20</sup> In a speech in October 1958, Dulles had drawn a parallel between the U.S. commitment to Taiwan during the Taiwan Straits Crisis and its commitment to Berlin. In talks with the Soviet ambassador to the GDR, M. Pervukhin, Ulbricht interpreted Dulles' statement as a warning that as soon as the crisis in the Far East was resolved, the "imperialists" would turn their attention to Berlin. Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, 198-99.

<sup>21</sup> Stefan Ignar, Vice Chairman of the Polish Council of Ministers.

## The Berlin Crisis and the Khrushchev-Ulbricht Summits in Moscow, 9 and 18 June 1959

“If you have thrown the enemy to the ground, you don’t need to then kneel on his chest”

### Introduction, translation, and annotation by Hope M. Harrison

These two summit meetings, between Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev and East German leader and Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) First Secretary Walter Ulbricht, took place in June 1959 during the second Berlin Crisis (1958-61) while the Conference of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the U.S., Soviet Union, England, and France (with the two Germanys sitting in as observers for the first time) was occurring in Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>1</sup> The CFM met from May 11-June 19 and July 13-August 5 to discuss Germany.<sup>2</sup> Much of the discussion at the two Soviet-East German summits in June was about strategy towards the Western Powers concerning Berlin and Germany at the CFM. A top-level East German delegation was in the Soviet Union from June 8-20, visiting Moscow, Riga, Kiev and Gorki and holding these two summit meetings with the Soviet leadership as well as learning much about Soviet economic, cultural, and other institutions.

The Geneva CFM was convened in response to Khrushchev’s ultimatum of 27 November 1958 to the Western Powers about Berlin and Germany. In the ultimatum, Khrushchev demanded that a peace treaty be signed by the four powers with both Germanys or with a united Germany and that West Berlin be transformed into a “free city” within six months or he would sign a separate peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic (GDR, or East Germany) and turn over to the GDR control of access routes between West Germany and West Berlin.<sup>3</sup> The six-month deadline was to expire on 27 May 1959. The Western Powers relented beforehand, agreeing not yet for a summit of the heads of state (which is what Khrushchev really wanted), but proposing a meeting of the foreign ministers to discuss the issues raised in Khrushchev’s ultimatum, as well as other topics. If progress was made at the CFM, then there might be a summit of heads of state. The Western proposal for the CFM on Germany, with the Four Powers and German representatives, was sent to Moscow on 16 February 1959. The Soviets responded on March 2 saying that they really thought a summit of the heads of state would be the most appropriate forum for discussing the German question, but if the West refused, they would agree to a CFM, with Czech and Polish, as well as East and West German, observers. In a note on March 26, Washington held to its position, supporting initially only a CFM and only with observers from the two Germanys. The Soviets accepted on March 30 the plans for the Geneva CFM to convene on

May 11 to discuss a German peace treaty and Berlin.

Thus, in less than six months, Khrushchev achieved two major objectives: negotiations with the West on Berlin and Germany, and *de facto* recognition of the GDR. Khrushchev made it clear to Ulbricht at their June 1959 summits that he had used the threat of a separate peace treaty threat as a “Damocles’ sword” to force the West to the negotiating table. On June 18, he told Ulbricht: “I don’t know whether we will bring this issue of the signing of a peace treaty with the GDR to realization; however, such a prospect acts in a sobering way on the Western powers and West Germany. This, if you will, is pressure on them, Damocles’ sword, which we must hold over them.” Presidium member Anastas Mikoian agreed: “Before they didn’t want to talk about Berlin at all, but now they are forced to carry out negotiations with us on it.”

Now that Khrushchev had actually gotten the West to the negotiating table, however, it was not clear how hard he really wanted to push his adversaries. As he told Ulbricht on June 9, “Earlier we said that in the event of the Western powers’ refusal to sign a peace treaty with the two German governments, we would sign a peace treaty with the GDR. But now it is necessary to create a safety valve. Therefore we are proposing the creation of an all-German committee,” which he imagined would spend “one or one and a half years, until 1961,” working out a plan for unification. In fact, Khrushchev told Ulbricht on June 18, “Let’s not set a time limit. . . . Let’s act more flexibly on this issue. . . .” Paul Scholz<sup>4</sup> agreed with this idea for a very different reason. He pointed out that due to Khrushchev’s 27 November 1958 ultimatum, on 27 May 1959, “is well known, on that day everyone in the GDR expected that something would happen. Therefore, it is better not to decree a concrete date, but to preserve freedom of movement for oneself.” He did not want the GDR to be in the embarrassing position again of not reaping the gains that Khrushchev had publicly promised it.

Khrushchev did not expect much from the CFM itself. On June 9, he said to Ulbricht that the conference “won’t have any tangible results . . . since the situation itself still doesn’t have a basis for positive resolutions.” Besides, “not one self-respecting prime minister will allow his foreign minister, due to prestige considerations, to sign an agreement on concrete issues.” They would save this honor only for themselves. Thus, “Geneva—it’s a test of

strength, it's a sounding out of positions."

Aside from forcing the West to the negotiating table by his ultimatum, and using the CFM for a "sounding out of positions," Khrushchev saw the CFM as a way to buy time during which to improve the GDR economy and its competitiveness with West Germany and West Berlin. Khrushchev believed that after one to one and a half years, "They will be weaker and we will be stronger." "In 1961 the GDR will start to surpass the FRG in standard of living. This will have very great political significance. This will be a bomb for them. Therefore, our position is to gain time." Ulbricht agreed that "it's clear that the signing of a peace treaty with the GDR would exacerbate the situation, for which we are not now prepared. Economically we still cannot exert influence on the West; therefore, we must win time." GDR Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl reminded those at the meeting that "in our conditions economic problems turn into political ones." The final communiqué of the meetings, published in *Pravda* on June 20, stated: "The delegations emphasize that the main influence on the situation in Germany and also to a significant extent in Europe, in the sense of the consolidation of peace and democracy, is exerted under the current circumstances by the successes of the workers of the German Democratic Republic in answering the economic tasks which were determined by the resolutions of the 5th Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany." The Soviets and East Germans understood how important an improvement in the East German economic situation was.

Khrushchev wanted some sort of agreement with the Western Powers which would help legitimize the GDR regime in the international arena and thus also help stabilize the situation within the GDR by reducing the number of refugees fleeing the country for West Berlin and West Germany. Having both West Germany and East Germany participate at the CFM as observers was seen as a big step forward for the GDR and for Khrushchev's strategy. Khrushchev told Ulbricht at their meeting on June 9 that the West's "invitation of the GDR to the conference, which signifies *de facto* recognition of the GDR," was an indication that the Western strategy of "rollback" had been "unrealistic" and that the West now realized that its "efforts to subvert the countries of Eastern Europe from the socialist path of development had completely failed."

Now that Khrushchev had achieved what he called Western "de facto recognition of the GDR," however, he was not going to push for *de jure* recognition. As he told Ulbricht on June 9, "We don't think it's worth it now to push the West to the wall, so we won't give the impression that we are seeking the recognition of the GDR. The Americans don't want to recognize the GDR. They can't do this for prestige reasons. That, and we would be offended. They didn't recognize us for 16 years, and you want them to recognize you after 10 years. You need to wait at least 17 years. In any case, such a stating of the

issue, such an intention from our side would hinder the relaxation of tensions." One wishes for a tape recording of this meeting to hear the tone of Khrushchev's voice as he said this to Ulbricht! Khrushchev keeps playing both sides in these summits with Ulbricht; on the one hand standing up for GDR interests, yet on the other hand, not wanting to place decent relations with the West too much in jeopardy.

Similarly, on June 9 Khrushchev recounted a Russian expression to Ulbricht: "If you have thrown your adversary to the ground, you don't need to then kneel on his chest. We don't need to show that we won." But on June 18, he declared: "we must always understand with whom we are dealing. They are bandits. If we were weak, they would long ago have resolved the German question to their advantage. . . we must not forget that if we let down our guard, they will swallow us up." Thus, he blustered, "The more the Western powers know that there is a balance in the area of atomic weapons and rockets, the better it is for us." Perhaps emboldened by the USSR's 1957 achievements in orbiting a satellite (Sputnik) and testing long-range ballistic missiles to exaggerate Soviet nuclear strength, Khrushchev vacillated between pressuring the West and then pulling back.

Ulbricht, for his part, seemed more subdued than he became in meetings later in the Berlin Crisis. He did, however, as usual, push for more Soviet economic aid. At a certain point in the meeting on June 9, when Khrushchev seemed to think he has just ended the meeting by "summing up the exchange of views" and "expressing his sincere gratitude" for the "complete unity of views" between the East Germans and the Soviets, Ulbricht then went on "to speak more about the situation in the GDR" and the economic difficulties, which were particularly problematic, since the East Germans "compare the standard of living in the GDR with West Germany and West Berlin." Khrushchev promised to consider the GDR's requests, but clearly worried about how much the Soviets could afford to help the GDR. "We must reckon with our real capabilities. I would like to remind you that we began the competition with capitalism naked and with bare feet. The people believed us not only due to the promises of sausage and beer, but also due to the teachings of Marx and Lenin."

Beyond fishing for more economic aid, however, in these summits, Ulbricht was not really more militant than Khrushchev on the peace treaty or West Berlin. Instead, he seemed to agree that the GDR needed to "buy time" until it was in a better economic position to risk Western retaliation against a more hard-line strategy, such as signing a separate peace treaty and turning over to the GDR control of the West Berlin access routes.

In terms of reaching a settlement on Germany and/or Berlin among the Four Powers at the Geneva CFM, no real progress was made. Both sides talked of an interim agreement on Berlin and a reduction of Western troops in West Berlin, but the Soviets continued to insist that if no final agreement were made to change the status of West

Berlin, after the interim period of a year or a year-and-a-half, the Western troops would have to leave West Berlin and the latter must be transformed into a demilitarized international "free city" with no subversive and propaganda activities directed against the GDR or the Communist bloc. The West would not agree to most of this. The Soviets also continued to insist that a peace treaty be signed with both Germans or a united Germany and called for an all-German committee, made up equally of East and West German representatives, to draw up plans for German unification. The West put forward a package deal of stages toward German unification (which would ultimately include free elections throughout Germany) which was incompatible with Soviet proposals. The West insisted on Four Power rights in Berlin, as guaranteed in the 1945 Potsdam agreements, and the Soviets insisted that those were no longer just.

After Gromyko announced on June 9 that the Western powers could maintain their rights in Berlin for one more year and Khrushchev announced on June 19 that an all-German commission could have a year-and-a-half to come up with plans for reunification and a peace treaty, the West, feeling these were deadline threats, called a recess to the CFM. Given that the East German delegation was in the Soviet Union at this very time, as Michael Lemke points out, there was reason for the West to believe that they were meeting to plan "new measures in case there was no agreement on West Berlin at Geneva. One should increase the 'pressure' on the Western Powers, urged Valerian Zorin, the First Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR."<sup>5</sup> As the transcripts from the two summit conversations indicate, Khrushchev was clearly following a strategy of keeping up pressure on the West on West Berlin and a German peace treaty, although his feeling of "not wanting to set a deadline" and wanting to be "more flexible" clearly was momentarily forgotten when he and Gromyko set renewed deadlines in June. And the final communiqué of the Soviet-East German meetings states, in the usual threatening way, that if no agreement is reached on a peaceful resolution on the German question, the Soviet Union and other interested countries will sign a peace treaty with the GDR.<sup>6</sup>

In the meantime, in spite of President Eisenhower's vow that he would plan a summit meeting with Khrushchev only in the event of significant progress at the Geneva CFM, due to an apparent misunderstanding within the U.S. bureaucracy, an invitation for a summit meeting was issued to Khrushchev on July 11, and on August 3 it was announced that Khrushchev would visit the United States. Thus, when the CFM reassembled from July 13-August 3, it was not surprising that no progress was made. Khrushchev had already received his invitation to the U.S., something far more important to him than a CFM.

### Document No. 1

#### "Short Summary of the Talks with the GDR Party-Governmental Delegation on 9 June 1959"

Secret. 4 July 1959.

Soviet officials taking part in the talks: N.S.

Khrushchev [First Secretary, Presidium member, and head of delegation], A.I. Kirichenko [Presidium member and Central Committee Secretary], F.R. Kozlov [Presidium member and Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers], A.I. Mikoian [Presidium member and First Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers], V.V. Kuznetsov [First Deputy Foreign Minister], V.C. Semenov [Deputy Foreign Minister], M.G. Pervukhin [Ambassador to the GDR].

The following assisted in the talks: Deputy Head of the CPSU CC Dept. N.T. Vinogradov, [and] heads of departments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, N.M. Lun'kov, and A.Ya. Popov.

Taking part in the talks from the German side: the GDR party-governmental delegation. [The document does not list who was in the East German delegation. Minister President Grotewohl's files,<sup>7</sup> the published communiqué,<sup>8</sup> and the records of the summits indicate that the delegation included W. Ulbricht (First Secretary, Politburo member and head of the delegation), O. Grotewohl (Minister President and Politburo member), F. Ebert (Mayor of Berlin and Politburo member), B. Leuschner (Politburo member, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, and Chairman of the State Planning Commission), E. Correns (President of the National Council of the National Front), H. Loch (Deputy President of the Council of Ministers and Chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party of Germany), J. König (Ambassador to the USSR), H. Homann (Vice President of the Volkskammer and Deputy Chairman of the National Democratic Party of Germany), A. Bach (Vice President of the Volkskammer and Chairman of the Christian Democratic Union, P. Scholz (Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Deputy Chairman of the Democratic Farmers' Party of Germany), and R. Korb (Stasi official, Head of Central Information Groups).]

Assisting in the talks was also GDR Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Collegium member A. Kunderman [who was also the head of the Foreign Ministry's Department on the Soviet Union].

**Khrushchev:** Let me welcome the GDR party-governmental delegation and give the first word to the guests.

**Ulbricht:** There is a series of issues which it is imperative for us to discuss.

I would like to start with the conference in Geneva. As is well known, the Soviet Union's proposal about a peace treaty at the Geneva conference was opposed by the Western powers' package of proposals. In sum, its core comes down to liquidating us not immediately, but step by step, in three stages.

Also in connection with the Geneva conference, the question is: what can our delegation do for the further development of initiatives[?] We would like to exchange views with you on this. We think that an important step for developing this initiative was Gromyko's proposal to create a commission of the representatives of the two German states. However, neither the West nor the Bonn government has responded to this proposal. Therefore, we should think about what we should undertake in this regard in the future.

Moreover, I would like to note that the proposals of the Western powers completely ignore the question of the prohibition of West German nuclear arms. Thus, our delegation in Geneva first of all raised the question of the prohibition of atomic arms and rocket installations in West Germany. This is the first issue which, in our view, must occupy the commission.

We also proposed to the FRG [Federal Republic of Germany] to conclude a non-aggression pact, a treaty on the renunciation of the use of force between the two German states. Adenauer refused this proposal, but it met with support among the West German population (in particular from the FDP [Free Democratic Party] and SPD [Social Democratic Party]). Our proposal was understood by all and accepted, because it demands that both sides renounce something. We gave you the draft of this treaty and would like to know your view on this issue.

However, in any case, the question of a peace treaty remains at the center of attention. As regards us, proceeding from the above considerations, we emphasize especially one part—the prohibition of West German nuclear arms, [a position] which has the understanding of the FRG population.

The second issue about which we would like to exchange views is West Berlin. As is well known, the Americans are raising the question of preserving their rights in West Berlin. But we think that the issue of the preservation of occupation rights can't be raised now. We think that since 14 years have passed since the end of the war, it is time for a peace treaty.

The USSR proposed keeping a symbolic force in West Berlin. For our part, we are prepared to give a guarantee of access to West Berlin.

So where are the disagreements?

In the fact that the Western powers don't want to carry out negotiations on guarantees with the GDR, although we already control them [i.e., guarantees of Western access to West Berlin] about 95%. Thus, the issue is the following: we must give a guarantee in the name of the GDR separately from four power agreements. Although in fact this will be an agreement of five powers. Gromyko is trying to achieve this at the conference [in Geneva]. But the West is not agreeing to it.

If an agreement of the four powers is reached at a summit on this question, we are prepared to publish a declaration on guarantees separately.

We also need to decide which tactics to follow on the

issue of reunification. Our delegation in Geneva raised the question of whether we should publish in Geneva our declaration concerning a confederation. This question was discussed in the Politburo. But doubts arose among us about the utility of such a step at the current moment, since the Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs is not especially suitable for this.

Maybe it would be better to do this at a summit conference?

At the conference in Geneva, Gromyko raised the question of having an all-German committee study the questions of the preparation and conclusion of a peace treaty and the reunification of the country. If the Soviet comrades don't object, maybe we could discuss with the Soviet side how an all-German committee could study the peaceful resolution of the German question, and could give an instruction to our [Foreign] Minister [Lothar] Bolz to make corresponding proposals in Geneva and announce that we are also ready to discuss the question of reunification in this commission.

The next issue is a summit conference. If at a summit conference the positions move closer together and if some sort of agreement is reached, we would welcome all this, because we think that this would facilitate a return to a discussion of the issue of a peace treaty. However, the details of this can be dealt with later.

This, in short, is what I wanted to say.

**Khrushchev:** We have discussed all of these questions and believe that Geneva has given good results. It showed the unrealistic policy of [U.S. Secretary of State John Foster] Dulles which is aimed at the so-called "liberation" of Eastern Europe. This policy, which is directed at a blockade of Eastern Europe, the subversion of these countries from within, etc., is completely bankrupt. And it was clearly shown that efforts to subvert the countries of Eastern Europe from the socialist path of development completely failed.

Instead of this, they came to the conference in Geneva [and] agreed to the invitation of the GDR to the conference, which signifies de facto recognition of the GDR. Thus, the situation as a whole has turned out favorably for us. As regards the question of the unification of Germany, this problem is now used by the West only for propagandistic goals. The information which we have completely supports this. When our responsible comrades spoke about this question with representatives of the West, the latter directly said that the reunification of Germany is impossible.

De Gaulle, for example, said: "We are not for two Germanys, but really for three and even four." Eisenhower implied to Gromyko that the USA considers unification impossible at the present time, remarking that, in his view, it is a long process.

Macmillan and Adenauer also think this way. The latter is especially afraid of German unification and as long as he is alive—there won't be reunification.

We correctly announced in Geneva that we are for



German reunification, but that this issue must be resolved by the Germans themselves, that is the main thing, that is the essence of our position.

Now we have prepared new proposals, which Gromyko will put forward today. These proposals don't change anything, but tactically it is advantageous for us to make them. The essence of these proposals is that we propose creating an all-German committee from the two German states on an equal basis (with a proportion of 1:1). This committee must be occupied with issues of bringing together the two German governments, developing contacts between them, and preparing a peace treaty. The four great powers have no responsibility for the activity of this committee and will not give them any instructions. The Germans themselves must resolve all issues connected with the activity of this committee.

Aside from this, we don't think it's worth it now to push the West to the wall, so that we will not give the impression that we are seeking the recognition of the GDR.

The Americans don't want to recognize the GDR. They can't do this for prestige reasons. That, and we would be offended. They didn't recognize us for 16 years [until 1933—ed.], and you want them to recognize you after 10 years. You need to wait at least 17 years. (p. 5) In any case, such a stating of the issue, such an intention from our side would hinder the relaxation of tensions.

You know that there is a demagogic system in the USA, there are 2 parties, but both are charlatans. They have said so much against the socialist camp, that they can't now recognize the GDR. And if [Christian] Herter [new U.S. Secretary of State] agreed to it, he would quickly be fired. So we have to reckon with such a situation. In such a situation, we must work out our tactics carefully. We need not Bolz but the Western representatives themselves to put forward proposals advantageous to us. We must make our proposals in such a way that they move them forward like their own, and we will support them. We don't need to rush, we must wait. We cannot show that we are in a hurry to get acceptance of our proposals in rough form.

Regarding the future of the Geneva conference, we can already say now that it won't have any tangible results. We spoke about this earlier also, since the situation itself still doesn't have a basis for positive resolutions.

In addition, in my opinion, not one self-respecting prime minister will allow his minister of foreign affairs, due to prestige considerations, to sign an agreement on concrete issues. You don't think de Gaulle will allow his minister to sign an important decision? Neither Eisenhower nor Macmillan would allow this either.

Geneva—it's a test of strength, it's a sounding out of positions.

Therefore, our proposals must be put in such a form that they will be attractive to the population.

However, on the whole we must notice that the situation now has become so difficult that the Americans

must find a way out. But prestige considerations strongly pin them down. The USA recognizes that the situation in West Berlin is abnormal, and that it is necessary to normalize it. They are talking, for example, about an agreement now on reducing the number of their troops in West Berlin from 10,000 to 7,500. But the issue of the number of troops in Berlin has no significance for the correlation of forces. We even spoke about this with Macmillan during his visit to Moscow. We told him: send 100,000 troops to West Berlin, but this will be worse only for you, and for us it will be easier, since in the event of an aggravation of the situation, these troops actually would find themselves surrounded, in a trap.

Currently the USA is also proposing to agree on the liquidation of espionage centers and radio stations, the cessation of propaganda, [and] the liquidation of subversive activities on the condition that we guarantee their rights in West Berlin.

We told them that we can't do that, since already more than 14 years have passed since the end of the war. However, we don't want to make an ultimatum, but we want to show that we are looking for real possibilities for the resolution of these problems.

They also proposed freezing the number of forces in West Berlin [and] agreeing that there won't be any rocket or atomic weapons there before German unification. And Gromyko is currently waiting for instructions from us on this issue.

Now the question of the peace treaty. Earlier we said that in the event of the Western powers' refusal to sign a peace treaty with the two German governments, we would sign a peace treaty with the GDR. But now it is necessary to create a safety-valve. Therefore we are proposing the creation of an all-German committee. Without us, but on our recommendation, the committee would deal with the issue of the preparation of a peace treaty and the reunification of the country. We are proposing a concrete period of activity for this committee—for example, 1-1 1/2 years, that is, until 1961. If the Germans don't come to an agreement among themselves in this period, we will be free from any obligations and we will look for the possibility of concluding a peace treaty with the two German governments or with one German government.

But during this period, that is, until 1961, they must reduce their forces in West Berlin, stop subversive activity [and] propaganda, [and] liquidate espionage centers. This is the main thing. We agree to the temporary preservation of the occupation regime until 1961.

Why are we doing this? It would be very attractive to all pacifists, since we will show them that we are acting without an ultimatum, but searching for a way for the resolution of these issues.

On the other hand, it is necessary to allow time so that the Western powers can move away from their old position.

The situation in this case is complicated in the following way: we are giving the Germans time to find a

way out, but if they can't find it, then how can we help?

This is a very advantageous position. And what will we lose? Nothing. The resolution of the issue is only put off for a year or a year-and-a-half. And what will happen in this time? They will be weaker, and we will be stronger. Therefore, I think that we don't need to force the pace of events on this issue, since then the neutral states and many proponents of peace in the whole world won't understand us. We must not alienate our friends and neutral states.

The fact of the GDR's existence and development has already been recognized by Eisenhower and Macmillan, and public opinion understands and supports the GDR even more.

There is also a process of evolution among the German people. The progressive forces support the GDR and this process will be strengthened in the future. This is why Adenauer is enraged. And so, he doesn't want the liquidation of the "cold war."

The question is: will they accept our new proposals? One can say with 70% certainty that they won't.

So then it will be even more necessary to have a summit meeting.

Speaking as a whole, the essence of our differences of opinion on this question are that they want to drag out the occupation regime, and we want to limit it. Therefore, on the one hand, we will allegedly concede to them, but at the same limit their time, giving them the possibility to reform.

Last year, we raised these issues [i.e., the 27 November 1958 ultimatum]. Now already almost a year has gone by, but in this time we have already turned around the core of public opinion. Therefore I would like to recall here a Russian saying, which says that if you have thrown the adversary to the ground, you don't need to then kneel on his chest. We don't need to show that we won. We should give the impression that both sides won. Let them yell about their victory, but we will say that it was also our victory.

In 1961 the GDR will start to surpass the FRG in standard of living. This will have very great political significance. This will be a bomb for them. Therefore, our position is to gain time.

**Grotewohl:** We could hardly reckon that they would agree with our proposals in Geneva. At the current time, the conference is in a decisive stage. It is possible that the Soviet proposals will be rejected. But this can't mean that there won't be a summit conference. Our goal is to win time. Any time which we win for negotiations, any negotiations is better than a "cold war." Precisely from this position, we must come to an appreciation of the world-wide historical scene, including the German question, which has subordinate significance.

Sometimes among us Germans, it seems that for us only Germany exists. But as a whole in international politics, the German question must take up only as much space as it merits.

We, as representatives of Germany, must have the

possibility of freely appearing before the whole German people on issues which are of vital importance to them.

In reference to Comrade Khrushchev, the Soviet proposals don't have any limitations for us in this regard, therefore I support these proposals.

If it is possible to reach some sort of compromise, that is, if the Germans will be forced to carry out negotiations between them, then this already will be an enormous step forward, it will mean recognition of the GDR. If West Germany refuses this, then this too will be a big plus for us, it will give us the opportunity to activate our work in the West. But the strength of this influence on the West will depend on taking some sort of positive step. For example, the renunciation of arming the German government with atomic weapons. We think that we must achieve this. This will give a new impetus.

Other positive steps would be the liquidation of all subversive centers.

The situation for us is clear, and if the subversive centers aren't liquidated, then we ourselves will undertake measures for the guarantee of our security.

The main thing is that people in the whole world see that a step forward has been made in the safeguarding of peace. And this step could be the prohibition of atomic weapons in Germany. From the point of view of German policy [*Deutschlandpolitik*], these proposals are acceptable.

We must discuss together the situation in Geneva. And it would be desirable if the representatives of the National Front and other parties who are present here would express their point of view on these questions.

**Khrushchev:** Our proposals are not connected with an initiative of the German comrades. The proposals which have been made by the German comrades are very good. But I think that you shouldn't appeal directly to the West.

**Ulbricht:** (rejoinder) They still aren't used to us.

**Khrushchev:** We are ready to listen to the opinions of all comrades who want to speak here on the issues we have touched upon.

**Bach:** I am certain that the new proposals of the Soviet government will find a positive response among the German people, because they correspond not only to the wishes of the GDR but also to the interests of the peace-loving forces of the FRG. Those sections of the population of West Germany who have been afraid until now to enter into contact with representatives of the GDR will now be activated. We must bear in mind that if the proposal for the creation of an all-German committee is accepted, it will help to encourage those forces in West Germany which have shown indecisiveness until now. In my opinion, it is also important that the work of the committee will be for a limited time.

Among the population, there has been a growing view that the conference didn't deal much with the issue of German unification. Insofar as the entire package of the Western Powers skirted around the question of the

unification of Germany, our new proposals in which the issue of unification is raised will allow us to take back the initiative.

**Homann:** I support what has been said here by the comrades. The question of ensuring security and peace is also the primary one for us. All other issues are derived from and subordinate to this question. Therefore I think that the proposals made here are correct. Negotiations in an all-German committee which must be carried out before 1961, will give us the opportunity to lay out broadly our position, to show that from our side the national question is decided on a path of peace and peaceful coexistence with other countries, and to show that the development of the GDR guarantees a happy future of Germany. We can also demonstrate that the policy carried out in the GDR under the leadership of the working class is really a national policy.

**Loch:** Adenauer represents himself as a fighter for democracy and unification, but Adenauer's decision to withdraw his candidacy for president called forth a wave of protest and opened the eyes of many to the real state of affairs in the FRG.

Therefore, Khrushchev's proposals will have great significance. An all-German committee which will decide the fate of Germany, this is of course a step forward. The creation of this committee could activate the opposition forces in West Germany. The strengthening contacts between West German and GDR parties will gain new impetus.

In conclusion, I would like to express my certainty that we will return with good results to the GDR, which will allow us to strengthen our struggle for realizing the tasks which are before us.

**Scholz:** If we want peace, we can only agree with your proposals.

During Geneva we tried to explain things to the farmers and at every meeting, the question was asked: will there be war after Geneva[?] This testifies to the fact that people are thirsting for peace. However, some have lost heart, they don't see the real possibility to reach agreement. Therefore, the formation of the committee would be an important step in this direction which would inspire many. Thus I entirely agree with the proposals of the Soviet comrades.

**Correns:** There has already been a lot said here about Khrushchev's proposals. I think that these proposals will be well accepted in West Germany, since they are intelligent.

The propaganda in the FRG tries to present everything as if the USSR always says no. The new Soviet proposals cut the ground out from under this propaganda. This will give us great help in our all-German work and will give us the opportunity to start a conversation with the population of the FRG.

**Khrushchev:** If there aren't more people who want to speak, I would like to elaborate on one issue. The Western Powers are not accepting our proposals for a free

city. But psychologically they are already prepared that a treaty with the GDR will be signed. Therefore, they are now especially worried about the situation in West Berlin. They are asking us, they are defining precisely, what the situation in Berlin will be. From their side, they have put forward the formulation that the GDR exercises control over the communications of the Western Powers with West Berlin "as agents of" the Soviet Union. We immediately answered them that this is unacceptable to us. But there is one question of theirs we must answer. They are saying: what will happen if the GDR one day takes the initiative and closes communications between West Berlin and the West?

And so on this issue there must be clear agreement. This has vital significance, even in relations between friends. We can imagine two forms of such guarantees:

1) The GDR together with the Western powers signs an agreement on guarantees. But the West probably won't agree to this. And we don't really need to achieve this.

2) The GDR guarantees it by a unilateral declaration.

However, in this case the Western powers want us to make the guarantee for your guarantee.

**Ulbricht:** Please. [i.e., okay]

**Khrushchev:** This would not be right. We can't do this. Therefore, we must sign an agreement with the Western powers which will be registered at the UN, in which it is foreseen that in the event that the GDR violates its obligations regarding guarantees, then the great powers together will seek measures to bring pressures to bear on the GDR.

In our view, this is the only possible path right now. Do you have other proposals on this issue?

**Ulbricht:** Will this point of view be proposed at Geneva or at a summit?

**Khrushchev:** Yes, in Geneva. If we don't do this at the Geneva conference, a vacuum might be created at Geneva and there won't be any sense of a future at the conference.

We don't know whether Eisenhower will agree to this. But it is necessary for world opinion to know about these positive proposals by our side.

**Ulbricht:** The remarks by Comrade Khrushchev are very important. The time is really ripe for this. We must find a way out. But it is clear that we can't solve all issues in one stroke. Therefore I discussed the peace treaty very carefully, since it's clear that the signing of a peace treaty with the GDR would exacerbate the situation, for which we are not now prepared. Economically, we still cannot exert influence on the West; therefore, we must win time. This also concerns our policy with regard to the Social Democrats [SED] and the opposition circles of the West through which to isolate Adenauer. The signing of a peace treaty with the GDR would complicate the situation. In all regards, Khrushchev's proposals correspond to the real situation and our domestic political situation.

But we are interested that the issue of nuclear disarmament remain on the agenda. We must constantly

discuss this, since only by this path can we isolate Adenauer. Therefore we will put special stress on all issues which are understood by the majority of the German people. Our opinions in this regard concur completely. All parties in the GDR support these proposals. Accordingly, we will give corresponding instructions to our delegation in Geneva.

And in the future we will declare our support for a non-aggression pact between the two German states and for the liquidation of the occupation regime in West Berlin. But from the point of view of the development of the situation in Berlin, we also need to gain time, since Western propaganda is now maintaining that the dependence of West Berlin on the East would mean the lowering of the standard of living in it.

**Khrushchev:** I would like to quickly sum up the exchange of views on these issues. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the German friends for the fact that you correctly understand us and between us there is a complete unity of views that the German people support us.

This inspires certainty in us, this attests to us that our policy is right. If all the parties in the GDR approve of it, that means that world public opinion will correctly perceive it also. This understanding is a great victory of our peace-loving policy.

**Ulbricht:** I would like to speak some more about the situation in the GDR. The first months of fulfilling the plan of this year speak to the fact that we are quickly moving forward. We have been thoroughly occupied with certain branches [of the economy], especially chemical [industry and] construction, therefore we have achieved well-known successes. In construction, business has also gotten better now. Currently we are occupied with light industry and trade where we have well-known lags.

The main issue for us now is the increase of work productivity and the reconstruction of industry. In the chemical industry, the corresponding plan has already been worked out. For other branches, we are discussing [the plans]. It is also a new development that cooperation between the workers and intelligentsia is developing and growing. Brigades of socialist labor have been formed. There are about 10,000 of these brigades. The stimulus for this was an initiative of the Soviet comrades in creating brigades of communist labor. It is true that we have them at a lower level than you do, but it is occurring without any kind of propaganda or pressure from above. Thus we highly value this development.

In this connection, we have a request—to bureaucratize and broaden the cooperation and ties between large enterprises of our countries. Until now, too many functionaries [and] trade-union workers, but not direct representatives of industry have travelled [to us]. We should develop connections between exemplary industrial factory workers.

Until August, we are mainly working on a plan for developing agriculture for the period up to 1965. But we

have tasks which we cannot resolve with our own forces by 1961. It is a question of acquiring some foodstuffs and consumer goods, such as wool, coffee, cocoa, and southern [tropical] fruits.

**Khrushchev:** We will give you oil instead of cocoa.

**Ulbricht:** Of course we can survive even without cocoa. But the question here is about comparing the standard of living in the GDR with West Germany and West Berlin. At the current time, the population still goes to West Berlin to buy some of these goods, which has, of course, negative political consequences.

We have a list of goods which we need, and we ask you to familiarize yourself with it and to see how you can help us. We are prepared to pay for everything you want in 1963. This is a proposal of the Politburo and planning commission. We aren't presenting these lists for negotiations. We would only like your specialists to look them over and tell us how they could help us. Concretely, the question is of a credit of 700 million rubles over 2 years, 1961-1962.

**Khrushchev:** Let [Bruno] Leuschner [Head of the GDR State Planning Committee and Politburo member] and Mikeoian study this question.

**Ulbricht:** I would also like to inform you about the situation in agriculture. The development of our agricultural production is proceeding normally on the whole. At the current time, SKhPK's [Agricultural Production Cooperatives] occupy 49% of land space. We want to strengthen the weak SKhPK's now, and give agricultural technology to the strong cooperatives. We are not planning to speed up the tempo of the cooperativization of the farmers.

In the area of cattle-breeding, we have well-known difficulties. But we are studying these problems now so as to overcome the shortcomings we have here. On the whole, I would like to emphasize again that our agricultural situation is not bad.

We have another request. It has to do with broadening the scientific-technical cooperation between our countries. In several areas we have already achieved world standards. In other areas we are strongly lacking. Therefore we would request that you help us in the development of the chemical industry and in several other areas. I have in mind giving us help in the matter of mastering the technology of new machines. We will give you our best machines, the organization of technological processes for producing these machines, the blueprints for these machines, etc., and you will give us yours. In addition, we ask you to familiarize us with the models of those machines which you buy in America and other capitalist countries. For example, we now produce beautiful artificial fibers, but we are very backward in the production of weaving machines. Our research council worked out a concrete plan and proposal on this issue. And we already gave an order to stop the production of old machines. We are in a good position, for example, in heavy machine building and in the chemical industry

where you exerted certain pressure on us.

But we can only surpass West Germany by carrying out a quick reconstruction of industry. Without this we cannot resolve our main economic task. Besides, our intelligentsia compares not only our standard of living with the level of West Germany, but also the level of production. Therefore, it would have great significance also for the resolution of the question about the intelligentsia.

In sum, the issue is to strengthen [our] exchange and cooperation.

Your delegation which was in the GDR already gave us significant help in this regard. We hope that this cooperation will strengthen even more in the future.

We also think that it is time to broaden the cooperation between our countries in the area of schools, including in the preparation of textbooks.

Until recently, this matter was going badly here. But it has improved in the past year. It is true that we have some different forms and methods of work, but the principles are the same. The same basic problems face you and face us. We are now preparing new school laws which will be implemented shortly. The main direction in which we are going is the introduction of polytechnical education in the schools.

But we are particularly behind in the development of new textbooks and in this regard we need more significant help.

**Khrushchev:** We agree with you. And we will give you help where we can. But these issues are difficult. Therefore let's wrestle [with them] together. The question of schools, of course, is easier than the question of reconstructing industry. And what you need, what you find good for you [from us], take it. If something isn't suitable for you, don't take it. Here we must have a free exchange of views.

It's harder with machines. And the issue here isn't with secrecy, but with the fact that we have very many machines, and we ourselves often don't know whether we make them worse or better than other countries.

In this connection I would like to say that I really liked your [trade] fair. It gives an idea of a level of achievement of world technology. It even served as a stimulus for the CPSU CC plenum which will meet this month.

On the whole we want to say—let your engineers look at what is suitable for you, and what is suitable, take. We buy a lot of machines abroad. You can also get the blueprints of these machines, and your engineers can assist in their assembling.

Thank you for the information on the situation in your country.

**Ulbricht:** We need to agree on working out the text of the communique. From our side, comrades Leuschner, Kundermann and Korb could participate in its preparation.

**Khrushchev:** From our side, comrades [V.V.] Kuznetsov [First Deputy Foreign Minister], [Mikhail]

Pervukhin [Soviet Ambassador to the GDR], [and] [Vladimir] Semenov [Deputy Foreign Minister] will participate.

**Grotewohl:** I have one concern. Ulbricht already expressed our ideas, our points of view on economic issues. We agreed that Leuschner will discuss this with comrade Patolichev. But we already ran into this problem in the past. If comrades approach this question from the point of view of foreign trade, then the whole matter will be reduced "to a pencil." But in our conditions economic problems turn into political ones.

If we obtain the creation of an all-German committee, but then we have to retreat, our position will be deplorable. Therefore, I really ask you to take this situation into account. We need credits for 1961 and 1962, and I would ask that the Soviet comrades approach this issue from the perspective of what I have said.

**Khrushchev:** We will look at all of this. We must reckon with our real capabilities.

I would like to remind you that we began the competition with capitalism naked and with bare feet. The people believed us not only due to the promises of sausage and beer, but also due to the teachings of Marx and Lenin.

The Americans are placing great hopes now in the organization of their exhibit in Moscow. They are reckoning that the Soviet people, looking at their [the American] achievements, will turn away from their [Soviet] government. But the Americans don't understand our people. We want to turn the exhibit against the Americans. We will tell our people: look, this is what the richest country of capitalism has achieved in one hundred years. Socialism will give us the opportunity to achieve this significantly faster.

Therefore, we won't raise the issue of socialism or coffee. Socialism—first, but coffee must be delivered, today maybe not the whole cup, but tomorrow the whole cup.

We aren't tradesmen, we are friends. Therefore, we approach all issues politically. But before giving an answer, we must consider, we must look at our capabilities [to help you economically].

Notes taken by: comrades Beletskii, Kotomkin, Myal'dizin

## Document No. 2

**"Summary of the Talks with the GDR Party-Governmental Delegation on 18 June 1959. On the Soviet side, the same people took part as in the previous meeting, and also A.N. Kosygin and N.S. Patolichev," 4 July 1959**

Secret. Notes taken by Beletskii, Kotomkin, Mial'dizin.

**Ulbricht:** Let me express the gratitude of our delegation for the warm welcome we received in Moscow,

Riga, Kiev and Gorki. Our meetings were a significant event in the development of friendship between the Soviet Union and the GDR. We are all very pleased with the trip, including the students who were also in our delegation. We are very grateful to you for everything, including also for the well-composed program. Regarding the visit to the Exhibition of the Achievements of the National Economy of the USSR (VDNKh), it is completely clear that we could only become acquainted with it in general outline. But already after that, it became clear to us that at home we have an entire series of unresolved problems [economically]. At home we are discussing things, but sometimes they aren't applied quite right. Thus, we ask you to accept a group of our specialists for a more detailed study of your achievements which were shown in the Exhibition. This is particularly so with regard to electronics and chemistry. This will have great political significance also, because it will give our intelligentsia the opportunity to be convinced of the superiority of Soviet science and technology over the West, especially over the Americans and West Germans.

**Khrushchev:** We will welcome everyone who comes to us with the goal of becoming acquainted with our achievements.

**Ulbricht:** Maybe we should listen to the report on the prepared communiqué.

**Khrushchev:** They gave us the text of the communiqué late, and we didn't have the opportunity to study it in detail. Thus I propose studying in more detail the draft communiqué we received and giving our views through our representatives.

**Ulbricht:** Agreed.

**Khrushchev:** Now I would like to say a few words on one important question, namely: on a peace treaty.

Or perhaps [should I] acquaint you with the latest information on Geneva?

We recently received a letter from Eisenhower and yesterday we gave an answer.<sup>9</sup> I would like to emphasize that in accordance with our agreement, the exchange of letters took place confidentially.

From Eisenhower's letter, it is clear that we can't expect any great results from the Geneva conference. The Western powers bring everything back to the question of the period of time. They say that our proposal about a time period of 1 year is an ultimatum, although in principle the issue of a time period was put forward by them themselves in the overall plan.

They want to have a meeting with Adenauer, to wreck the agreement on the committee, proposing the principle of proportional representation on the committee. They know, of course, that if they go for the creation of the committee, this would be recognition of the GDR. However, refusing our recent proposals, they at the same time made a series of concessions and proposed limiting the number of troops in West Berlin [and] stopping subversive activity on its territory. But for this they want us to confirm their rights to maintain their occupation in

West Berlin forever and to renounce signing a peace treaty.

They are trying to represent our latest proposal as a threat. But that isn't what is a threat to them, the threat to them is our will for peace and [our] readiness to have a partial resolution of issues.

When we speak about the conclusion of a peace treaty, we have in mind the conclusion of a peace treaty with two or with one German state.

I don't know whether we will bring this issue of the signing of a peace treaty with the GDR to realization[;] however, such a prospect acts in a sobering way on the Western powers and West Germany. This, if you will, is pressure on them, Damocles' sword, which we must hold over them.

Why? Because by the signing of a peace treaty with the GDR they will lose all their rights to West Berlin which come from the fact of the military defeat and the unconditional surrender of Germany. The threat of war from their side is nonsense, it is blackmail, since it is clear that [merely] because of the two and a half-million inhabitants of West Berlin, it would be unreasonable to place under threat the lives of a hundred million people. The more the Western powers know that there is a balance in the area of atomic weapons and rockets, the better it is for us.

Therefore we must directly establish our point of view on a peace treaty in the communiqué. If we didn't do this, it would be a gift to Adenauer; then they would say: the representatives of the USSR and GDR assembled and were afraid to move away from their old positions. Thus I think that we must continue our line on this issue and reflect our position in the communiqué. Furthermore, this must be strengthened by new arguments in our speeches also.

**Ulbricht:** We are in full agreement with you. I would just like to direct your attention to one issue in connection with the communiqué. Where the recent Soviet proposals are discussed, it says that the Soviet government agrees to the temporary maintenance of the well-known occupation rights of the Western powers in West Berlin. We exchanged opinions on this issue in the delegation. We propose to start not with West Berlin but with the transitional time period (let's say—1 year) during which the commission must agree on a series of questions, that is, to lay special stress on the fact that the Western powers have recommended a limited transition period. This stating of the issue corresponds to the Soviet proposals and at the same time alleviates for the Western powers the transition to this new position. And this facilitates our argumentation.

**Khrushchev:** Let's not give a time period. A year or a year-and-a-half—this isn't a key issue for us. We are agreed on different time periods, but we aren't agreed on endlessness. Let us act more flexibly on this issue, using a sliding scale of time periods. They are proposing two-and-a-half years, we [are proposing] one year. Maybe we will agree on something in between.

**Ulbricht:** For us, the main thing now is not to drive them into a corner, but to give them the possibility to change their position.

**Khrushchev:** Maybe I will acquaint you with the contents of Eisenhower's letter and our answer to it. (The text of the letters is read.)

As you see, in principle there is nothing new, only a repetition and elaboration of what has been said earlier. The new thing is just that we are agreed to make a compromise on the issue of a time period. And this we must emphasize in the communiqué.

I would like to emphasize again that the Western powers aren't interested in a peace treaty, because otherwise they would weaken the threads which are connected with NATO. The present position already weakens NATO, but signing a peace treaty with Germany, this would mean normalizing the situation in Europe. But then how could the Americans keep Denmark, Luxembourg [and] Greece in NATO?

And even the seemingly strong tie of de Gaulle with Adenauer—this is a relative understanding. In France the issue of the removal of American bombers from their country was raised.

Now a few more words on the peace treaty. When the Western powers want to sign any sort of treaty, they don't think about anything. This was how it was, for example, with the conclusion of the treaty with Japan [which the U.S. signed with Japan in 1951 and didn't include the Soviets]. And they weren't blamed by us for the signing of separate peace treaty. Therefore, in order to unmask them, we must write directly in the communiqué: we will achieve the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany. But if the reactionary forces will hinder this, then we agree to conclude a peace treaty with two German states. And if the Western powers don't want this, then we will conclude a peace treaty with the GDR.

In concluding a peace treaty with 2 German states or with the GDR, all agreements on the occupation will cease their operation. There is no point in discussing West Berlin separately from the issue of the peace treaty, since this doesn't have equivalent value. These aren't two questions but one question. Berlin is an issue derived from the problem of a peace treaty. But we must clearly speak in the communiqué about the status of the free city of West Berlin[:] otherwise we will be accused of agreeing to swallow up West Berlin. Clearly we must also speak about guarantees.

**Ulbricht:** We agree.

We also heard that [U.S. Secretary of State Christian] Herter wants to exclude the German question and agree only on the cessation of the testing of nuclear weapons. He is looking here for a path to a summit conference. As for us, we think that without any reduction of tensions, we cannot move forward including on the German question. Thus, if the Western powers want to talk about disarmament, it wouldn't be bad, because then we would again come to the question of a peace treaty, but from the

other side.

I would also like to note that only a part of the German people understand the slogans about a peace treaty. Thus we will put on the main plan those issues of the peace treaty which are more understood by all, such as for example the liquidation of rocket bases and the prohibition of atomic arms in West Germany. Proceeding from this, it is in our interests that the summit conference will be successful on the issue of atomic disarmament.

**Khrushchev:** That is correct. But the main thing is to fulfill the resolutions of the [SED] 5th congress [of July 1958], to raise the standard of living. Then it will be clear to each German where there is freedom and where there isn't freedom.

**Grotewohl:** From a general estimation, I agree with what has been said here. I just have one reservation. It seems to me that the comparison with Japan appears a bit formal. Signing a peace treaty with Germany and with Japan are two different things. Japan was a single state at the moment of the signing of the treaty, but Germany is divided. If we sign a peace treaty, the good conditions will be complicated. However, in the West, they will try to present the signing of a peace treaty with the GDR as the deepening of the division of the country. If there is a peace treaty signed with the GDR, this would mean that there would be written into it something about the acceleration of militarism in the GDR, whereas the problem lies in the acceleration of militarism in West Germany. Since at the current time we can't count on the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany or with two German states, then, obviously, this national problem—stopping the arming of (p. 7) West Germany must be resolved now by other means, by the fulfillment of the resolutions of the 5th Congress. We cannot separate these issues.

What we need to study now, what we need to resolve is to determine our relations to the occupying powers and to the occupying authorities. The Western powers currently are formulating their entire policy on the principle that they are allegedly defending freedom and Western culture. They declare that for the defense of this freedom they must maintain the occupation of West Berlin. This explains the fact that they are fighting persistently for their formulation of preserving their rights of occupation.

Thus N.S. Khrushchev's proposal not to give a concrete time period in the communiqué is correct. This will make our position more flexible. Proceeding from this, we must find such a formulation in the communiqué which will present the liquidation of the occupation regime as a necessary process of development in order to make that understandable to everyone.

The most decisive thing in all the negotiations is to win time, and time can be won only through negotiations. So, I agree with you.

**Ebert:** I would like to speak about the issue of a peace treaty and about Berlin. I agree that a peace treaty and Berlin are one issue. But for our activity in Berlin, it is

important to emphasize that by preserving the current situation, we can find a way to normalize the situation in Berlin (pushing off from their concessions to bring about the stopping of subversive activity, propaganda, etc.). Their proposals on this are already a step towards the normalization of the situation. I must emphasize that normalization is possible not only on technical issues (connections, transport, etc.) but also in political relations. The normalization of life in the city is the basis of our proposals on Berlin. Thus we must obtain such a normalization more persistently and as soon as possible, since this will be understood by the whole population.

**Khrushchev:** I think that the comments made by Comrade Ebert are correct and they must be taken into account in preparing the communiqué.

**Bach:** We were very surprised that the last proposal of the Soviet Union in Geneva<sup>10</sup> was seen as an ultimatum by the Western powers. What Comrade Khrushchev said regarding the answer to Eisenhower is a question of diplomatic tactics. We all agree with these tactics. Comrade Khrushchev emphasized that even if we don't speak of time periods, the main issues remain in force.

**Khrushchev:** Yes.

**Bach:** We take this into account in our communiqué. If I understood correctly, we should write [in the communiqué] that, in case at Geneva there is no principled agreement reached regarding the signing of a peace treaty with Germany, the USSR is ready to sign a separate peace treaty with the GDR.

**Khrushchev:** We will not call that treaty separate. We must show that not only the USSR, but all countries which are ready for it can sign a peace treaty with the GDR. A number of countries have already declared their agreement to sign such a treaty with the German Democratic Republic.

**Homann:** On the question of the methods of the realization of our principles, we are ready to compromise, but on the main issues we must remain unbending. The main thing is that what we have said here must be reflected in the communiqué, since this will strengthen the certainty of those who are fighting for peace in Germany.

It is important to write this down, since we evaluated here developments in Germany and the progress of the conference in Geneva. And a basis would be established for further movement forward on the German question.

**Scholz:** I would like to emphasize that a peace treaty with the GDR is not only a means of pressure on the Western powers, but it also has great significance for the domestic political situation in the GDR. For a long time, we have mobilized the people of the Republic under this slogan. We made a series of concessions, but we must now emphasize that our position remains unchanged on basic issues.

However, it is necessary to emphasize this in the communiqué, but without naming a concrete time period. We already have experience with the date May 27 [the deadline for Khrushchev's 27 November 1958 ultimatum].

As is well-known, on that day everyone in the GDR expected that something would happen. Therefore, it is better not to decree a concrete date, but to preserve freedom of movement for oneself. It will alleviate our political work, although it may also seem that we are not consistent.

**Mikoian:** I would like to respond to Comrade Grotewohl regarding the analogy between the peace treaty with Germany and the peace treaty with Japan. Of course, there is a difference between a peace treaty with Germany and a peace treaty with Japan. But in this case, the issue is different. The analogy with Japan helps us. The Western powers fought against Japan together with us and signed an act on its capitulation. And we all should have signed a peace treaty with Japan together. But they themselves violated that principle. It is a very serious argument in our hands against them.

They think that so long as there isn't a peace treaty, all conditions connected with the capitulation are still active, and the occupation rights remain in force. When we proposed concluding a peace treaty with Germany, it was a correct and strong approach from our side. This proposal cut the ground out from under their feet. Before they didn't want to talk about Berlin at all, but now they are forced to carry out negotiations with us on it.

We would like to sign a peace treaty with a united Germany. We propose to give a certain time period for achieving agreement on this issue between the German states. If such an agreement is not reached, then we are ready to conclude a peace treaty with two German states. If the Western powers won't agree to this either, then we will sign a treaty with the GDR.

But they don't want the signing of a peace treaty at all. Therefore, if they will be afraid that there will be a peace treaty signed with the GDR, which would deprive them of their occupation rights, then they will be forced to find a new path for agreement. The threat of signing a peace treaty will force them to carry out negotiations with us.

I think that Comrade Scholz was right when he talked about the great significance of a peace treaty also for the GDR. It is important for the GDR, because it would raise its significance in the eyes of world public opinion.

**Khrushchev:** We could take examples from history. When, for example, the revolution occurred in Russia and the Soviet representatives carried out negotiations with Germany in Brest in early 1918, the German government signed a peace treaty with [Simon] Petliura and turned their troops on Ukraine, and not only on Ukraine, but all the way to Rostov. And Russia waged war with Germany being a united state.

Or take the example of Vietnam. In Geneva in 1954 the great powers agreed on the carrying out of free elections in Vietnam [after] a two year period. Were there elections? There weren't. Who fought against holding these elections? Mainly, the USA fought against this. It wasn't advantageous to them, and so they didn't even



think about elections.

It appears that capitalistic morals go like the wind blows—they do what is advantageous for them. When it is advantageous to them, they find the necessary arguments.

Now about proportional representation. They say, for example, that the GDR is one-third of Germany, and the FRG is two-thirds. But if we take China, 600 million people live in the PRC [People's Republic of China], and 10 million people live on Taiwan. And who do the Americans recognize, whose representative sits in the UN?

Such are the morals of a blockhead.

Or Guatemala. With the help of rough forces, the USA expelled the democratic government [of Jacob Arbenz in 1954] which they didn't like, because it was advantageous to them [to do so].

Furthermore, the Americans maintain, for example, that Franco's Spain is a free country, and they want to accept it in NATO.

Therefore we must always understand with whom we are dealing. They are bandits. If we were weak, they would long ago have resolved the German question to their advantage.

Adenauer decided to remain chancellor in order to carry out a "policy of strength" better than Dulles himself did.

So we must not forget that if we let down our guard, they will swallow us up.

However, we have the means to scratch them slightly on the throat.

Our cause is just. They will not start a war, and we all the more [won't].

Developments are going in our favor. This is true not only for the USSR, but all for the socialist countries, including also the GDR. The GDR must exert socialist influence on the entire West. We have everything we need to do this.

Look at how the situation changed in 1956. They didn't want to shake hands with us. And now Macmillan himself came to us. And soon [U.S. Vice President] Nixon and [Averell] Harriman will come travel around our country. And it is because a difficult situation has been created for them, and it will become more difficult.

If they accused us earlier of resolving social problems by force, now everyone can be convinced that we decide these issues by the force of the example of socialist organization.

Thus our communiqué will have great significance. It will also reflect our peace-loving firmness.

**Ulbricht:** Thank you very much for your explanation.

**Khrushchev:** We are very glad that our points of views coincide. This is especially important for such a pointed issue as the German one. Speaking of our united views, I have in mind the representatives of all the parties of the National Front of Democratic Germany.

**Ulbricht:** Comrade Khrushchev emphasized that the most decisive issue for us is the issue of the fulfillment of

the main economic tasks. We, on our side, are doing all to realize these tasks. Therefore we have set ourselves the goal of surpassing the FRG. This will have great significance also for the resolution of the Berlin issue. It isn't accidental therefore that [Berlin Mayor Willy Brandt recently said that the question of the struggle for Berlin is a question of the struggle of two systems.

However, for realizing the tasks before us, we ask you to give us help. Comrade Leuschner informed us about the talks which took place on this issue. We thank you for giving us help.

**Khrushchev:** Are we finished with the question of the communiqué? Let the responsible officials definitively edit the text of the communiqué keeping in mind also the comments of Comrade Ebert about how we are ready to eliminate in parts the phenomena which are interfering with the reduction of tensions, although it can't be done immediately. This would be a good beginning on the matter of the reduction of tensions, [and] it would lay the way for reaching agreement on the German question.

If there aren't other comments, let us move to economic issues.

Maybe the comrades who carried out negotiations on economic issues could inform us of the results.

**Ulbricht:** Maybe we could listen to Comrade Leuschner.

**Leuschner:** We conducted the negotiations on the basis of the lists which were presented by the German side. During the negotiations, Comrade [N.] Patolichev [Minister of Foreign Trade] noted that the Soviet Union acquires a series of goods for us which we need from the capitalist market.

We understood Comrade Patolichev such that the Soviet Union is prepared to grant us credit in 1960 in the amount of 250 million rubles, for which will be acquired wool, cocoa, coffee, southern fruits, leather, etc. (we asked for 400 million rubles); 200 million rubles in 1961 for the same goods (we asked for 400 million rubles); and in 1962 120 million rubles (we asked for 300 million rubles).

Regarding the payment for this, Comrade Patolichev suggested to fix that in the annual talks. We agreed with this proposal.

Now we can return to working on the seven-year plan. In September, Comrade Ulbricht submitted the draft seven-year plan to the Volkskammer [the GDR parliament], and we will have the opportunity to work with a clear perspective. Now all issues which were open for us have been resolved.

It is true that we didn't completely reach the level of demand in the FRG in certain goods. But that isn't the main thing. Our plan is strained, but we will apply all our forces to fulfill it.

**Khrushchev:** We already have some experience with talks with the union republics on the composition of plans. Usually they always ask for two-three times more.

**Leuschner:** We didn't have in mind giving lists for negotiations, and we haven't raised too high demands.

**Khrushchev:** I had in mind here our workers. Aside from this, you must bear in mind that developments sometimes go better than we plan. Thus you must keep in mind that as for us, you can open additional possibilities which will facilitate the resolution of the problems before us.

**Mikoian:** The comrades pointed here to the necessity of buying southern fruits. These products could be acquired for the GDR from the lesser developed states of the East in exchange for their products, all the more since these countries are experiencing difficulties in selling fruits. This would also improve the political weight of the GDR in these countries.

**Khrushchev:** The GDR must study these markets and adapt to them.

**Mikoian:** From our side, we can help you with your foreign trade apparatus, and Yugoslavia can also give you this help.

I would like to make another proposal, if there aren't objections from your side, namely: to prepare in the next one-two months a plan of foreign trade exchange for seven years between our countries.

**Ulbricht:** That is a very good proposal. It would be desirable to sign an agreement on it before the meeting of the Volkskammer, that is, in August. Maybe Leuschner and Patolichev could agree on the basic conditions of this treaty still before the departure of the delegation?

**Khrushchev:** Good.

**Ulbricht:** In the name of the delegation, I would like to express great satisfaction with the results of the talks which have shown complete agreement on all questions. The business discussion during the negotiations showed that cooperation between our countries deepens more and more. We heartily thank you.

**Khrushchev:** And we would like to thank you and also express the hope that our meeting will serve the deepening friendship not only between our governments, but also with the entire German people. On the issue of how relations are turning out between the USSR and the GDR, not only are our countries interested, but all peace-loving peoples are also.

[Source: *Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (AVP RF), Moscow, Fond 0742, Opis 4, Portfel' 33, Papka 31, ll. 71-87 for June 9 and ll. 88-102 for June 18; obtained and translated from Russian by Hope M. Harrison.]*

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<sup>1</sup> The foreign ministers representing the United States, Soviet Union, Great Britain, France, East Germany, and West Germany were, respectively Christian Herter, Andrei Gromyko, Selwyn Lloyd, Maurice Couve de Murville, Lothar Bolz (State Secretary and First Deputy Foreign Minister Otto Winzer was there too as the real political head of the delegation), and Heinrich von Brentano (Brentano refused to sit in same room as Bolz, so Wilhelm Grewe, the West German Ambassador to the U.S., sat there representing West Germany). On Brentano and Grewe, see Ann Tusa, *The Last Division* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1997), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> For detailed U.S. documentation on the Geneva CFM, see U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Vol. VIII, Berlin Crisis, 1958-1959* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1993); and for useful summaries of the CFM from the Western perspective, see Jack Schick, *The Berlin Crisis, 1958-1962* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), pp. 71-96; and Tusa, *The Last Division*, pp. 163-177. From the Soviet perspective, see Oleg Grinevskij, *Tauwetter* (Berlin: Siedler Verlag, 1996), pp. 157-168.

<sup>3</sup> For the text of the ultimatum and other related documents, see *Documents on Germany, 1944-1985* (Washington, D.C.: Department of State Publication 9446, n.d.), pp. 552-559. For background information on the ultimatum and Khrushchev's personal role therein, see Hope M. Harrison, "New Evidence on Khrushchev's 1958 Berlin Ultimatum," *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Bulletin*, Issue 4 (Fall 1994), pp. 35-39. On the Berlin Crisis of 1958-61 more generally, see Hope M. Harrison, "Ulbricht and the Concrete 'Rose': New Archival Evidence on the Dynamics of Soviet-East German Relations and the Berlin Crisis, 1958-1961," CWIHP Working Paper No. 5 (May 1993), and Vladislav Zubok, "Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis (1958-1962)," CWIHP Working Paper No. 6 (May 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Deputy Chairman of the Democratic Farmer's Party of Germany.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Lemke, *Die Berlinkrise 1958 bis 1963* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), p. 130.

<sup>6</sup> *Pravda*, 20 June 1959, p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR – Bundesarchiv, ZPA, NL 90/472.

<sup>8</sup> *Pravda*, 20 June 1959, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> For Eisenhower's letter to Khrushchev dated 15 June 1959 and Khrushchev's response of June 17, see *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1958-1960, Vol. VIII*, pp. 901-903 and 913-917, respectively.

<sup>10</sup> At which time the Soviet Union gave the all-German commission 18 months to work things out.

## The End of the Berlin Crisis: New Evidence From the Polish and East German Archives

### Introduction, translation, and annotation by Douglas Selvage<sup>1</sup>

**W**hy did Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev not keep his promise to sign a separate peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic (GDR) after the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961? Most scholars agree that after the construction of the wall, he was concerned in part that a transfer of Soviet control functions in and around Berlin to the GDR might spark a military conflict with the West.<sup>2</sup> Hope Harrison's work points to a second factor: a desire on Khrushchev's part to free himself from the leverage that the East Germans had achieved during the crisis by threatening to collapse. He saw the Berlin Wall, she writes, "not only as a way to save the GDR by stemming the refugee exodus, but also as a way to wall in Ulbricht in East Berlin so that he could not grab West Berlin by gradually usurping the Soviet border control functions."<sup>3</sup>

A third factor in Khrushchev's decision not to sign a separate peace treaty, I will argue, was his fear of a Western economic embargo against the GDR and the Soviet bloc in general. All scholars agree that Khrushchev approved the construction of the Berlin Wall first and foremost to stem the flow of refugees and prevent the immediate economic collapse of the GDR. Recently-declassified documents from the Polish and East German archives suggest that his decision not to sign a separate peace treaty with the GDR arose in part from a similar fear. A peace treaty with the GDR, he declared in private meetings after the construction of the wall, would most likely spark a Western economic embargo against the socialist bloc. Such an embargo, he worried, would undermine the stability not only of the GDR, but also of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and other Soviet-bloc countries. This group of states, dependent on trade with the West, had already demonstrated an inability or unwillingness to provide the GDR with the level of economic support that East Berlin had been demanding. In the wake of a Western embargo, they would have had difficulty providing for their own needs, let alone the GDR's. Even Soviet officials complained about the undue burden placed upon the Soviet economy by the GDR's endless demands. In February 1962, Khrushchev effectively ordered Ulbricht to end the GDR's campaign for a separate peace treaty and to focus instead on the GDR's economic difficulties, especially in agriculture. Ulbricht became the target of growing criticism in Moscow for his seeming inability to improve the GDR's economic situation.

#### Khrushchev's "Economic Romanticism"

Khrushchev's economic fears in 1961-62 stood in

stark contrast to his optimism of 1958-60 regarding the ability of the GDR and the Soviet bloc to withstand a Western embargo. On 10 November 1958, he had predicted in talks with Poland's communist leader, Władysław Gomułka, that the West might respond to his Berlin gambit with an economic blockade. This did not matter, he then contended, because the Soviet bloc had sufficient foodstuffs to supply both the GDR and West Berlin.<sup>4</sup> Even in November 1960, after a flood of refugees had left the GDR for West Berlin, Khrushchev reassured Ulbricht that if the West responded to a separate peace treaty with an embargo against the GDR, the Soviet Union and the other socialist states would give the GDR the necessary support to survive.<sup>5</sup> The Soviet leader overestimated not only the economic capabilities of the Soviet bloc, but also the willingness of the other socialist states to provide additional economic assistance to the GDR.

Khrushchev's miscalculations originated in a certain romanticism about the economic prospects of socialism—a complement to his "nuclear-missile romanticism" in the military field. According to Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, "Khrushchev's belief that the Communist system would prevail over capitalism made him reluctant to acknowledge the obvious: that economically the GDR was lagging behind prosperous West Germany and depended on the Soviet Union's subsidies."<sup>6</sup> The same Khrushchev who declared that the Soviet Union would catch up and surpass the United States in the economic field within ten years seemed to believe Ulbricht's claim in 1958 that with the economic support of the socialist camp, the GDR could meet or even surpass the FRG's standard of living within several years.<sup>7</sup> By the time of his meeting with Ulbricht in November 1960, it was clear that this would not be the case. In fact, the GDR's economy, it turned out, was dependent upon West Germany for steel and other essential goods. On September 30, Bonn had announced its plans to terminate the inter-German trade agreement at the end of the year. Bonn was retaliating against the GDR's growing restrictions on travel to and from West Berlin—restrictions that had not been cleared by the Soviets. Nevertheless, Khrushchev reassured Ulbricht that the Soviet Union and the other socialist states could and would provide the GDR with the necessary economic aid to survive an embargo—"East German needs are our needs." On that note, Ulbricht agreed to a renewal of Moscow's offer to conclude a separate peace treaty with the GDR—this time, by the end of 1961.<sup>8</sup>

### Poland, the Soviet Bloc and the Berlin Crisis

Khrushchev had clearly not consulted in advance with the other socialist states about his offer of increased economic assistance. Even while Ulbricht and Khrushchev discussed economic preparations for a peace treaty in July 1961, Poland rejected an East German request for additional aid. It would not grant the GDR an additional 150,000 tons of coal in 1961 unless it received raw materials in return. It also refused to lower the price of coal or to forego an increase in transit costs between the GDR and the Soviet Union.<sup>9</sup> Not only Poland, but also Czechoslovakia and Romania were apparently resisting the GDR's economic demands.<sup>10</sup> The growing opposition to the GDR's beggar-thy-neighbor economic policies most likely played a role in the somewhat cryptic report to Ulbricht on July 15 that despite his ongoing talks with Khrushchev, he should be prepared to discuss "political-economic" and military issues at the Warsaw Pact meeting in Moscow from 3-5 August 1961.<sup>11</sup>

Hope Harrison's analysis suggests that Khrushchev, under pressure from Ulbricht, agreed to the construction of the Berlin Wall some time by 26 July 1961.<sup>12</sup> New evidence from the Polish archives confirms that Ulbricht was pushing for a wall and Khrushchev was hesitating. Also pushing for the construction of a wall was Poland's Communist leader, Władysław Gomułka. The Polish leader later complained on at least two different occasions about Khrushchev's failure to act quickly. The flood of refugees through Berlin was creating a drain not only on the East German economy, but also on the economies of its allies, which felt compelled to assist the GDR (see Document # 1). In a speech before the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) on 22 November 1961, Gomułka justified the Soviet bloc's Berlin policy and the construction of the Wall. Gomułka declared: "Looking at things realistically, what was decisive for us in putting forth the matter of a peace treaty and Berlin, what was the deciding factor? Decisive was the fact was that they [the West] have been continually creating diversions in the German Democratic Republic for years, that they were continually drawing people out of Berlin and doing whatever they wanted to do. By the way, we were saying among ourselves here long before the Moscow meeting [of the Warsaw Pact in August] ... why not put an end to it? Close off, wall off Berlin. And later we made such a decision in Moscow."<sup>13</sup> Gomułka's call for speed in establishing "border controls" in Berlin at the August meeting of the Warsaw Pact in Moscow was thus not part of an orchestrated campaign of support for the GDR.<sup>14</sup> Rather, it was an expression of concern that Khrushchev might continue to hesitate on constructing a wall.

The same economic concerns that made Gomułka into an early supporter of the Berlin Wall also led him to oppose the idea of increased assistance for the GDR at the Moscow meeting. He agreed that the other socialist states needed to support the GDR's campaign to free itself from

dependence on West Germany (*Störfreimachung*), but the GDR, he warned, should achieve its goal through closer economic cooperation with its allies, rather than through demands for increased assistance. If the West decided to institute an embargo, Gomułka argued, it would be an embargo against the entire socialist bloc, not just the GDR. (Indeed, representatives of the Western powers and the FRG had agreed only one day before the Warsaw Pact meeting to institute an economic embargo against the entire Eastern Bloc if the Soviets or East Germans cut off Western Berlin.<sup>15</sup>) The other socialist states, he concluded, could assist the GDR, but not at the expense of their own economic development. Antonín Novotný of Czechoslovakia and Janos Kádár of Hungary supported Gomułka's arguments. Thirty percent of Hungary's trade, Kádár pointed out, was with the West; and of that trade, 25% was with West Germany. In general, the other socialist states were willing to sign a separate peace treaty, but were opposed to bankrupting themselves in order to assist the GDR.<sup>16</sup>

Khrushchev was taken aback by the attitudes of Gomułka and the other leaders. He criticized the socialist states for having so many economic contacts with the West. All socialist states, he declared, had a responsibility to support the GDR. If the GDR did not receive additional assistance, he warned, it would be overrun by West Germany; then, the *Bundeswehr* would be sitting on the borders of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Unless the GDR's standard of living were stabilized, he said, Ulbricht would fall from power.<sup>17</sup>

Despite Khrushchev's admonitions, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Romania continued to refuse the GDR the level of assistance that it was demanding. On September 12, the SED Politburo complained—somewhat hypocritically—that the GDR could "no longer accept the one-sided character of its economic relations" with Poland.<sup>18</sup>

### Khrushchev's Flip-Flop on a Separate Peace Treaty

After the construction of the Berlin Wall, Khrushchev—despite his earlier criticisms—increasingly adopted the arguments of Gomułka and the other socialist leaders. At the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in Moscow in October 1961, he retracted the December 31 deadline for concluding a separate peace treaty, contingent upon progress in negotiations with the West on the German question. Although Ulbricht was visibly disappointed—his applause at the party congress died down after Khrushchev's announcement<sup>19</sup>—he had apparently been informed of Khrushchev's decision a month before. On September 23, Ulbricht had written a letter to Gomułka inviting him to attend the GDR's 12<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations at the beginning of October. "The participation of representative party and state delegations from the socialist states," the East German leader wrote, "will underline their determination to conclude a German peace treaty

*sometime yet in this century* [my emphasis].”<sup>20</sup>

In contrast to Ulbricht, Gomułka voiced his full support at the CPSU party congress for Khrushchev’s decision to withdraw the December 31 deadline.<sup>21</sup> This most likely reflected his own concerns about the effects of an economic embargo on Poland. During his stay in Moscow, Gomułka met with Khrushchev and Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko to discuss developments since August 13 (see Document #2 below). Gromyko summarized Moscow’s talks with the West since mid-August, and Khrushchev drew his own conclusions. The United States, Gromyko reported, had voiced a willingness “to recognize the borders of Germany *de facto* and *de jure* (the border on the Oder-Neisse)” and “the border between the GDR and West Germany *de facto*.” Rusk, Khrushchev added, had suggested that the U.S. might also support a non-aggression treaty between the Warsaw Pact and NATO—a staple of Khrushchev’s diplomacy—and, more importantly, the non-dissemination of nuclear weapons to both German states. Khrushchev justified his decision to postpone a peace treaty by pointing, on the one hand, to the potential concessions that could be won by continuing talks with the West and, on the other hand, to the potential damage that an economic embargo might cause to Poland, the GDR, and the other socialist states. He told Gomułka: “The situation is favorable to us... The USA requested that we not force the issue of a peace treaty with Germany, that we wait 4-6 weeks so that it can work out its own position... There will not be a war, but signing a peace treaty with the GDR might exacerbate the situation... We must continue our game... What will we gain and what will we lose by concluding a separate peace treaty with the GDR [?] We will lose: The Americans, the English, the French might declare an economic blockade against the USSR and the socialist countries. Regarding the USSR, these are empty platitudes, but the other countries—the GDR, Poland, Hungary and to a lesser extent, Romania—might suffer if they do that. We should wait for 4-6 weeks, like they [the Americans] asked, to conclude a treaty... We should not pass any resolutions. The game continues, we must keep applying pressure. We should coordinate our position with Comrade Ulbricht. We should carry on salami tactics with regard to the rights of the Western countries... We have to pick our way through, divide them, exploit all the possibilities.”

Based on the U.S. documents declassified to date, Khrushchev and Gromyko—at best—exaggerated Rusk’s expressed willingness to make concessions. To the consternation of the West Germans, Rusk had suggested to Gromyko that the U.S. would be willing to negotiate about issues relating to “European security” as soon as the Western powers’ right to access to West Berlin were insured and reaffirmed by the Soviet Union (i.e., the U.S. was unwilling to enter into negotiations with the GDR). The U.S. Secretary of State had mentioned specifically a reduction of armaments in Central Europe (but no

“disengagement”), the establishment of safeguards against surprise attacks, and an exchange of “assurances” between NATO and the Warsaw Pact “that they could live peacefully.” He has also declared that it was in the interest of both the U.S. and the Soviet Union to prevent the “spread of national nuclear weapons.” Rusk did not, however, ask the Soviets for “4-6 weeks” to formulate a position, as Khrushchev implied to Gomułka, nor did he suggest that the U.S. was prepared to recognize Germany’s borders—let alone the inner-German demarcation line—*de facto* or *de jure*. It was Gromyko, not Rusk, who kept bringing up in their talks Western recognition of the existing borders and of the “sovereignty” of the GDR.<sup>22</sup>

Although Khrushchev and Gromyko embellished Rusk’s comments, they were not lying to Gomułka to the extent that there were serious differences among the Western powers and the FRG regarding European Security and a Berlin settlement. Privately, the U.S. State Department was contemplating broader negotiations with the USSR over Berlin—a fact reflected in Rusk’s guarded comments to Gromyko. Specifically, the State Department was considering a more general settlement in Central Europe: a four-power declaration (U.S., USSR, Great Britain, and France) calling for the establishment of mixed commissions between the two German states to discuss personal, economic, and cultural exchange; a four power commitment to recognize the existing borders of Germany in any peace settlement (i.e. *de facto* recognition of the Oder-Neisse Line); a non-aggression pact between the Warsaw Pact and NATO; a four power declaration on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to third states; and a reaffirmation by Bonn of its 1954 commitment not to produce nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons.<sup>23</sup> When Adenauer visited Washington in November 1961, Kennedy probed him with regard to all three matters: inter-German commissions; recognition of the existing frontiers, especially the Oder-Neisse Line; and a renewed West German commitment forswearing weapons of mass destruction. Adenauer was opposed to concessions in all three areas. A renewed declaration on weapons of mass destruction would “discriminate” against the FRG; the Oder-Neisse Line remained at the very least a bargaining chip in any future peace settlement; and inter-German commissions would have to be limited to *ad hoc* discussion of technical matters, lest they lead to *de facto* recognition of the GDR.<sup>24</sup> The divisions within NATO between the U.S. and Great Britain, on the one hand, which were willing to discuss matters beyond a Berlin settlement with the Soviet Union, and France and the FRG, on the other hand, which opposed any linkage between Berlin and other issues, seemed to provide an ideal opportunity for Moscow to play the Western allies against each other.<sup>25</sup> This explains in part Khrushchev’s optimism—and embellishments—during his talks with Gomułka.

Although Khrushchev justified his decision to

Gomułka only in terms of the West's alleged willingness to make concessions and a possible economic embargo against the socialist bloc, one should not discount the role of other factors in his decision. Moscow's worsening relations with China or a fear of Ulbricht's growing influence might still have played the key role; Khrushchev would not have necessarily informed Gomułka about such ulterior motives.<sup>26</sup> The concerns that he expressed about an embargo, which openly contradicted his earlier statements on the subject, were clearly meant to appeal to the Polish leader's own interests and gain his support. Nevertheless, Khrushchev would use a possible embargo as an excuse for avoiding a peace treaty once again, during Ulbricht's visit to Moscow at the end of February 1962.

### Ulbricht's Visit to Moscow, February 1962

By the time of Ulbricht's visit to Moscow in February 1962, the talks between Gromyko and the U.S. Ambassador to the USSR, Llewellyn S. Thompson, had reached an impasse. The West had quickly retreated on the issue of recognizing Germany's borders—specially the inter-German border—and was focusing first and foremost on guaranteeing access to West Berlin (see documents #3-4 below). Nevertheless, Khrushchev had clearly decided by this point to abandon a separate peace treaty with the GDR, while Ulbricht still wanted to force the issue.

Ulbricht brought up the issue of a separate peace treaty during his first session with Khrushchev on February 26. The failure to conclude such an agreement, he told Khrushchev, had undermined the authority of the SED and the Soviet Union inside the GDR. "In wide circles of the population," he said, "the opinion has arisen that the Soviet Union and the GDR have overreached themselves in the struggle for a peace treaty." Ulbricht pleaded with Khrushchev to conclude a separate peace treaty by the end of the summer. It would assist the SED in the upcoming election campaign to the East German parliament, the *Volkskammer*, and help restore the party's tarnished image. The conclusion of a peace treaty, he suggested, need not exacerbate relations with the West; the GDR was willing to sign a peace treaty that left open matters relating to transit to West Berlin. If the West proved recalcitrant, the Soviet bloc could still use access to West Berlin as a lever to compel the Western powers' acceptance of the separate agreement.

Khrushchev rejected Ulbricht's plea. Although the Thompson-Gromyko talks were a "step back" from the West's earlier statements, the Warsaw Pact could not afford to exacerbate the situation by signing a separate peace treaty with the GDR—at least for the time being. Khrushchev cited two major reasons. First, there was a possibility of war with the West if the Soviet Union turned over control of the access routes to West Berlin to the GDR. Second, there was the threat of an embargo against the socialist bloc. He explained:

One must see things the way they are. We are

disturbing the USA's air traffic [to and from Berlin]. It has to defend itself. The imperialist forces will always be against us. One must see that West Berlin is not in Adenauer's hands. *On August 13, we achieved the maximum of what was possible* [my emphasis]. I have the same impression as before that the conclusion of a peace treaty with the GDR need not lead to war. But one must consider the situation realistically. You want to give your signature, and we are supposed to give economically, because one must see the possibility that after the conclusion of a peace treaty, there will be an economic boycott. Adenauer will carry out an economic boycott, and we will have to give [the GDR] everything that is lacking....

The signing of a peace treaty would lead to a normalization of the situation in West Berlin. The main question, however, is not the peace treaty, but a consolidation of the economic situation [in the GDR]. That is what we have to concentrate on. I say once again with regard to a peace treaty, that I believe there would be no war, but who can guarantee that? What is pushing us to a peace treaty? Nothing. Until August 13, we were racking our brains over how to move forward. Now the borders are closed. One must always proceed from the idea that the conclusion of a peace treaty must serve us, that we will conclude it when we need it.... We support the GDR's measures, but we do not agree that it is absolutely necessary to use the peace treaty as a slogan for the elections to the *Volkskammer*."

Khrushchev even expressed understanding for Kennedy's position. He openly voiced his concern—already posited by Hope Harrison—about what Ulbricht might do if the Soviet Union granted him control over the access routes to West Berlin.<sup>27</sup> "The Thompson-Gromyko talks are a step backwards in comparison to the earlier talks. The USA wants to raise its price. We have said openly that these are no foundations for negotiations. Previously, [U.S. President John F.] Kennedy presented his viewpoint on the borders of Poland and the CSSR [Czechoslovak Socialist Republic]. Of course he cannot ratify the German border between the GDR and West Germany. One cannot expect that of him. He is trying to reach an agreement—for example, on an international [border] control. In one interview, he posed the question himself of what one can do and to whom one can turn if, for example, Ulbricht infringes upon the [existing] order regarding access routes to Berlin. To whom can one turn in such a situation?" In case Ulbricht was hoping for assistance from the Chinese, Khrushchev dispelled his illusions. "The Albanians and the Chinese," he said, "are criticizing us with regard to the peace treaty and West Berlin. What are they doing themselves? (Portuguese colonies in India, Hong Kong, etc.)."

In effect, Khrushchev ordered Ulbricht to give up his campaign for a separate peace treaty and to focus instead on strengthening the GDR's economy, seriously weakened by the crisis over Berlin. The Soviet leader remained committed to granting the GDR more assistance than his

planning chief, Alexei Kosygin, thought was wise. (“In response to an objection by Comrade Kosygin,” the report on the February 26 meeting reads, “Comrade Khrushchev replied that we cannot act like petty traders.”) Nevertheless, in contrast to the meeting with Ulbricht in November 1960,<sup>28</sup> he now gave Kosygin free rein to criticize the GDR’s economic policies. Khrushchev himself chided Ulbricht for importing potatoes from Poland — a particularly pointed comment, given Ulbricht’s frequent criticisms of Poland’s failure to collectivize agriculture<sup>29</sup> — and Kosygin noted that the GDR, a former exporter of sugar, was now importing it. The East Germans, Khrushchev and Kosygin argued, were devoting great resources to building modern city centers when they needed to invest more in agriculture. In a final blow, the Soviets ordered Ulbricht to “activate trade with Bonn to the maximum extent” in order to help overcome the GDR’s economic difficulties. The subtext was clear: neither the GDR nor its allies could economically afford a separate peace treaty. Although the Soviet bloc, Khrushchev told Ulbricht on February 27, would “aggressively pursue” a campaign for a separate peace treaty, “we [the Soviet Union] will decide at what point to conclude it.” The Soviet Union, of course, never found the right moment to conclude such an agreement.

### Conclusions

Khrushchev’s decision to provoke the Berlin Crisis in November 1958 was the product of economic, as well as military-political, miscalculation. The Soviet leader overestimated not only the potential of the changing strategic balance to squeeze concessions out of the West, but also the economic ability of the GDR and the entire Soviet bloc to withstand the economic pressures — both potential and real — arising from a prolonged conflict with the West over Berlin and the German question. By 1961, East Germany’s socialist-bloc allies were no longer willing to sacrifice their own economic development for the sake of the GDR. Even if their fears of a Western economic embargo were not the deciding factor in Khrushchev’s decision to renege on a separate peace treaty with the GDR, they did provide him with a useful excuse to justify his decision. The irritation of the GDR’s allies — including the Soviet Union — with Ulbricht’s never-ending economic demands was quite apparent in 1961-62.

The economic weaknesses revealed during the Berlin Crisis would help spark a flurry of reform proposals in Eastern Europe during the early 1960’s: Khrushchev’s plans to reform the Comecon and institute a “socialist division of labor”; Gomulka’s project for closer economic cooperation within the “northern triangle” of Poland, the GDR and Czechoslovakia; and Ulbricht’s “New Economic System” for the GDR. Of the three initiatives, only the New Economic System would make it to the implementation stage.<sup>30</sup> Conflicts would continue between the GDR and its allies over economic questions. Khrushchev grew increasingly critical of the GDR’s

failings in agriculture — in particular, Ulbricht’s rejection of his pet project of introducing corn to East European agriculture.<sup>31</sup> Khrushchev’s son-in-law, Alexei Adzhubei, editor-in-chief of *Izvestiya*, vocally criticized Ulbricht at a gathering of Soviet-bloc journalists in May 1962. In his interview with the East German leader, Adzhubei declared, Ulbricht had not expressed “a single fresh thought.” He was still blaming all the GDR’s economic difficulties on “militarism in the FRG.” “We got the impression,” Adzhubei continued, “that Ulbricht is unable to deal with the fundamental question: how to achieve results in agriculture — they should work on it. Phrases cannot replace potatoes, which the GDR does not have.”<sup>32</sup> Adzhubei, of course, would make even harsher remarks about Ulbricht during his “mission” to Bonn in July-August 1964.<sup>33</sup> The tensions between Ulbricht and Khrushchev in 1964, the recently-declassified documents make clear, had their origins in the differences of 1961-62 over the East German economy and a separate peace treaty.

### Document No. 1 (Excerpt)

#### Transcript of a meeting between the delegations of the PZPR and the SED in Moscow, 2 December 1969

... [Polish Premier Józef] Cyrankiewicz: Earlier you spoke about closing the border [to West Berlin]; I would like to remind you of how many times the Poles [i.e., the Polish communists] proposed that it be closed.

Gomułka: And how much earlier!

Ulbricht: We know about this and have not forgotten. We were always of the same opinion as you. Even then, when something was hurting us — I have in mind the matter of the open border.

Gomułka: I would have shut it far earlier. How many times I told Khrushchev about it!

Ulbricht: We know about that, but Khrushchev believed after all that he could conclude a treaty with the FRG modeled after Rapallo....

[Source: AAN, KC PZPR, p. 110, t. 16.]

### Document No. 2

#### Rough Notes from a Conversation (Gromyko, Khrushchev, and Gomulka) on the International Situation, n.d. [October 1961]

Comrade Gromyko: In talks with [U.S. Secretary of State Dean] Rusk, [U.K. Foreign Minister Lord Alec] Home, [U.S. President John F.] Kennedy and [U.K. Prime Minister Harold] Macmillan, it struck me above all else how they conducted them in a friendly tone, which has not always been the case. We concluded that they are trying to find ways to achieve an understanding on the question of Germany and West Berlin. During the exchange of

views, every major issue was touched upon. Nevertheless, it was stressed in the conversations that this is only a preliminary exchange of views before official talks.

From the very beginning, Rusk<sup>34</sup>, Macmillan and Kennedy declared that we should discuss on the basis of the actual situation what would be acceptable to the Western countries. It has to do with access to West Berlin. Rusk emphasized that we should guarantee free access to West Berlin. We utilized Comrade Khrushchev's discussion with [Belgian Premier Paul-Henri] Spaak<sup>35</sup> and tried to justify ourselves by emphasizing that the GDR and the USSR have declared that they will respect the general order of the people of West Berlin. Our position was very understandable to them.

The question of access to West Berlin: Regarding this question, there have not been any statements. They are of the opinion that some new legal changes will have to be introduced or else the occupation regime will have to be maintained. Regarding Germany's borders: Rusk declared with Kennedy's approval that the government of the USA is prepared to recognize the borders of Germany *de facto* and *de jure* (the border on the Oder-Neisse). With regard to Czechoslovakia's borders, they are thinking over some form of commitment to recognize that country's borders. They are prepared to recognize the border between the GDR and West Germany *de facto*.

Comrade Khrushchev: Everything that we say here must remain top secret because our position corresponds to their position.

The West Germans are afraid that the USA will say more than it should about Germany's borders.

In the third discussion, Rusk also touched upon the following questions: security in Europe — (1) the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Home also spoke about this. (2) Rusk declared that the USA is in favor [of the idea] that the GDR and West Germany should not produce nuclear weapons and that other countries should not supply these countries with such weapons. (3) The USA declared itself in favor of reducing the size of armies on both sides of the front in the heart of Europe.

The first two matters should be resolved simultaneously. With regard to the other matter, the prevention of sudden aggression — that matter will have

to be resolved at a later date.

Conclusion: They consider the question of security in Europe a concession to our advantage.

With regard to the sovereignty of the GDR, there were no statements. They did ask us, however, how we understand [the issue of] respecting the GDR's sovereignty.

The situation is favorable for us.

The USA proposed that we continue the exchange of views. We voiced our approval.

The exchange of views will be continued with the USA's ambassador in Moscow.

The basis for further discussions is not bad.

Comrade Khrushchev: The USA requested that we not force the issue of a peace treaty with Germany, that we wait 4-6 weeks so that it can work out its own position. Comrade Khrushchev spoke further about the incidents on the border to West Berlin, about how access was suspended to West Berlin, which has become an island.

He spoke further about the incident with the tanks [i.e., the tank standoff at Checkpoint Charlie on October 27] and how the police are checking every route leading to Berlin.

In a conversation with Comrade Khrushchev, Kennedy always stressed that we are a great country and that we should respect each other.

There will not be a war, but signing a peace treaty with the GDR might exacerbate the situation.

Berlin is a closed city, without prospects /statement of American journalists/.

Although there will be no war, we should not exacerbate the situation. We must continue our game.

We are not afraid, but we do not want war. We can agree with Kennedy: What's Berlin to you? — before you there are enormous possibilities, history is working to your advantage.

What will we gain and what will we lose by concluding a peace treaty with the GDR[?]

We will lose: The Americans, the English, the French might declare an economic blockade against the USSR and the socialist countries. Regarding the USSR, these are empty platitudes, but the other countries — the GDR, Poland, Hungary and to a lesser extent, Romania — might suffer if they do that. We should wait for 4-6 weeks, like

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they asked, to conclude a treaty.

We are of the opinion that we should continue with our [current] line, should keep applying pressure and exploit the weaknesses of the enemy. We should strive to remove the official representatives from West Berlin and liquidate Adenauer's pretensions to West Berlin....

The economic situation of the USSR is outstanding, We should not force the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, but continue to move forward....

We should not pass any resolutions. The game continues, we should keep applying pressure. We should coordinate our position with Comrade Ulbricht. We should carry on salami tactics with regard to the rights of the Western countries....

We have to pick our way through, divide them, exploit all the possibilities.

Our situation is good, but if we do not apply pressure, then we will have to give up on signing a peace treaty with the GDR.

We cannot permit the reunification of Germany.

Why does [Konrad] Adenauer want to remain [West German] Chancellor? Because, he says, if we want to make contacts in the future with the Soviet Union, I can do it best.

Nobody supports West Germany in its desire for reunification.

I think that Adenauer is better than [West Berlin Mayor Willy] Brandt.

West Germany's ambassador [Hans Kroll] thinks that Adenauer should meet with Comrade Khrushchev.

We should set a meeting place....

[Source: AAN, KC PZPR, p. 115, t. 39, pp. 318-23.]

### Document No. 3

#### Note on the Discussion between Khrushchev and Ulbricht in Moscow, 26 February 1962 (Excerpts)

... Comrade Ulbricht pointed out that everything that the German side proposed to discuss had been fixed in writing.

Comrade Khrushchev stated that the declaration on the future of Germany can be designated as good; the responsible divisions in the foreign ministry and central committee have studied this statement and have several minor remarks, which one can accept or not. He did not yet have time to read the other documents. It would be useful, however, to talk over the economic problems in Gosplan, work out a position, and then discuss it. The German side agreed.

Comrade Ulbricht then pointed out that the documents were prepared on the basis of the last plenum of the CC [Central Committee of the] SED.

Since then, Adenauer has brought up the question of a change in the GDR's government. That means that Bonn

is realizing a decision reached a year ago. Adenauer is turning directly to the population of the GDR and calling for diversion and sabotage (radio). We have begun to do this as well, we are turning directly to the West German population with corresponding demands. It is, so to say, a period of unpeaceful coexistence. A campaign is being officially organized by Bonn for reunification through so-called free elections. The implication is that it would be possible to speak with the "Soviet zone" if it had a different government. In the last few days, it has been suggested that with such a change, help could be given to raise the standard of living [in the GDR], which is allegedly 20% lower than in West Germany.

The document before you about the historical role of the GDR, which was prepared by the appropriate authorities in the GDR, reflects the current situation. It shows with which forces an opening for the German nation can be found. It is to be approved at the congress of the National Front. One cannot fail to recognize that a certain difficulty has arisen due to the postponement of a peace treaty. In wide circles of the population the opinion has arisen that the Soviet Union and the GDR have overreached themselves in the struggle for a peace treaty. This is connected to a large campaign that is currently being organized in and through West Berlin. It also has to do with the mobilization of the revanchist organizations. The task stands before us to strengthen the GDR; the way has been worked out and certain circles of the workers are being won over to it. Currently, there is broad discussion of how even better results can be achieved in the mobilization of production [*Produktionsaufgebot*]. Now, the question arises of how to move forward with regard to a peace treaty and West Berlin.

In the Thompson-Gromyko talks, the respective standpoints are being tested. One has to see that the USA has raised its demands — e.g., with regard to controls on the autobahn. Kennedy is doing what Adenauer has proposed, but with more skillful methods.

It is a matter of clarifying prospects for the future. The document before you deals with the historical role of the GDR. It is of the greatest importance for the strengthening and future development of the GDR. It must be considered whether the GDR will make its own proposals regarding the problems of disarmament and the Geneva Conference. Perhaps with regard to the stance of the two German states towards disarmament. A broad campaign could be unfolded over what it means [to recognize] the results of the Second World War and gradually to eliminate its remnants. It must be examined, whether a conference of the consultative committee of the Warsaw Pact states or the foreign ministers with regard to changing the anomalous status of West Berlin would be useful, or whether a declaration should be published by both press bureaus.

Up to now, we have been silent on a number of questions because we do not want to come under suspicion of seeking to disturb the talks that are being held at the

highest level. We are in favor of a continuation of the talks between Thompson and Gromyko, but it must be weighed whether or not we should keep in sight the conclusion of a peace treaty near the end of summer. A commission would be necessary for this. What will come of it, if we go too fast? Crudely put, a bad peace treaty. That is, the questions of the borders and the capital would be regulated, and a number of the war's remnants would be eliminated. [The question of] air traffic would remain open, while the general traffic would remain as it has been. All of this would mean a strengthening of the German Democratic Republic. We are of the opinion that the USA would not have any formal reason to exacerbate the situation. One must consider the possibility of continuing to use the tactic used up to now of exploiting West Berlin as a means of pressure.

Hence, there is the proposal to conclude a peace treaty, including a protocol that expresses the matters in which the Soviet Union and the Western Powers stand in unanimity and that also states what still remains open.

In terms of strengthening the GDR, such a step would be greeted warmly; the conclusion of a peace treaty would be expedient for the elections to the *Volkskammer*. From Berlin, of course, one cannot perceive the entire situation, but simple propaganda for a peace treaty will not meet with the acceptance of the population.

In recent weeks, the enemy has greatly strengthened its attack. Many of the measures taken by the Soviet Union have been exploited against the GDR because they were carried out without any political justification — e.g., the trip of the Soviet garrison commander to West Berlin, the exercises by Soviet planes in the air corridors.

Comrade Khrushchev: One must see things the way they are. We are disturbing the USA's air traffic.<sup>36</sup> It has to defend itself. The imperialist forces will always be against us. One must see that West Berlin is not in Adenauer's hands. On August 13, we achieved the maximum of what was possible. I have the same impression as before that the conclusion of a peace treaty with the GDR need not lead to war. But one must consider the situation realistically. You want to give your signature and we are supposed to give economic [support], because one must see the possibility that after the conclusion of a peace treaty, there will be an economic boycott. Adenauer will carry out an economic boycott, and we will have to give [the GDR] everything that is lacking. I am proceeding on the basis of the interests of my country and from the interests of the entire socialist camp. One should not assume that the West has it easy. Why does it want guarantees for access? Because the West does not trust the people of West Berlin. They believe that West Berlin cannot hold out for more than ten years.

The signing of a peace treaty would lead to the normalization of the situation in West Berlin. The main question, however, is not the peace treaty, but a consolidation of the economic situation. That is what we

have to concentrate on. I say once again with regard to a peace treaty, that I believe there would be no war, but who can guarantee that? What is pushing us to a peace treaty? Nothing. Until August 13, we were racking our brains over how to move forward. Now, the borders are closed. One must always proceed from the idea that the conclusion of a peace treaty must serve us, that we will conclude it when we need it. The measures worked out by Comrade Ulbricht are correct. Of course the German people are affected by Western propaganda. It affects us less. We support the GDR's measures, but we do not agree that it is absolutely necessary to use the peace treaty as a slogan for the elections to the *Volkskammer*.

Comrade Ulbricht: The economic questions are naturally the most important. For us, they do not necessarily coincide with our political tasks. In previous years, we campaigned for the conclusion of a peace treaty, but then came the withdrawal of the deadline, and the impressions from that are still present in the population. It is necessary to conduct the propaganda about a peace treaty more carefully. Our population sometimes thinks differently. It links the peace treaty to national illusions.

The document before you is, so to speak, the expression of a new phase in our politics. We have thoroughly discussed it with the other parties, and it is correct that with regard to a peace treaty, one must be more careful.

Comrade Khrushchev returned to the peace treaty. What do we see? The Thompson-Gromyko talks are a step backwards in comparison to the earlier talks. The USA wants to raise its price. We have said openly that these are no foundation for negotiations. Previously, Kennedy presented his standpoint on the borders of Poland and the CSSR. Of course he cannot ratify the German border between the GDR and West Germany. One cannot expect that of him. He is trying to reach an agreement — for example, on an international [border] control. In one interview, he posed the question himself of what one can do and to whom one can turn if, for example, Ulbricht infringes upon the [existing] order regarding access routes to Berlin. To whom can one turn in such a situation?<sup>37</sup> One has to see that on August 13, we disturbed the stability of West Berlin. The GDR must be made invulnerable in economic terms. One must also discuss this with the Poles and the Czechoslovaks. The Albanians and the Chinese criticize us with regard to the peace treaty and West Berlin. What are they doing themselves? (Portuguese colonies in India, Hong Kong, etc.)<sup>38</sup> I think that our policy is correct, nothing disturbs us, and as long as imperialism exists, we will have to operate in this fashion.

Comrade Ulbricht interjected that the EEC [European Economic Community] is also becoming effective.

Comrade Khrushchev referred to the relations between Japan and the Soviet Union and started to speak in this regard about agricultural matters.

Comrade Ulbricht referred to the GDR's economic

situation. The preparations for the 1962 plan foresee a 7% increase in investments, and the growth in production will amount to around 6%. Overall, the standard of living remains the same as it was. Wage increases of around 1% will follow.

We want to try to carry out a mobilization of production for the conclusion of a peace treaty by this fall. One should not forget, however, that often the material incentive is missing. We are currently working with large savings measures, including a reduction in higher wages; the incomes must be cut. That means domestically a certain political risk.

We are having difficulties with investments because the investments in part are in areas with little economic return — e.g., metals [*Buntmetalle*] and coal. For us, the costs of production in these areas cost many times the world-market price. The plan for 1961 was not achieved. The workforce is lacking. We have a long-term agreement with the Soviet Union, but it cannot be completely fulfilled. It is necessary to develop further the specialization and the deliveries of raw materials. In the trade treaty with the Soviet Union, there are a number of quotas that cannot be met.

In terms of carrying out the plan, there is a greater orientation towards those branches of production that are profitable. A higher worker productivity absolutely has to be achieved by using the best machines, which are now going in part for export. A reorientation of industry in this way is necessary. Then the GDR will be in a situation to repay its credits.

In response to an objection by Comrade Kosygin, Comrade Khrushchev replied that we cannot act like petty traders. It has to do with creating a profitable economy in the GDR.

Comrade Kosygin is in agreement with the plans as they were presented. He pointed out that in the GDR there is, in part, higher consumption than in West Germany. A great deal is paid out in the form of social support, but the German only sees what passes through his fingers. He believes that the reduction in investment in agriculture is incorrect. Unprofitable branches of industry must be cut. The plan for 1962 is not yet ready; it will be necessary to work out the material in 1-2 days in order to reach an acceptable decision.

Comrade Ulbricht referred to the necessity of rebuilding several city centers. It is a political, not an economic, question.

In the construction of housing, a reduction in costs absolutely must be achieved, but he is of the opinion that for the time being, construction should not be touched.

Comrade Khrushchev referred to the difficulties in agriculture and asked whether it is true that the GDR bought potatoes from Poland.

Comrade Kosygin interjected that the GDR is importing sugar and before, it was exporting it.

Comrade Khrushchev pointed out that the transformation of agriculture is a protracted process —

e.g., the development of combines.

A long conversation evolved over the development of agricultural machinery.

At the end of the discussions, it was decided to carry out the next discussion on the afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup> around 1600 hours. In the meantime, talks were to be held between [Chairman of the State Planning Commission] Comrade [Bruno] Leuschner and Comrade Kosygin.

[Source: Dölling, *Ambassador*, "Note of the Discussion on 26.2.1962," 7 March 1962. *Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PA/AA), Außenstelle Berlin, Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten (MfAA)*,<sup>39</sup> *Ministerbüro (Winzer), G-A476.*]

#### Document No. 4

#### Note on the Discussion between Khrushchev and Ulbricht in Moscow on 27 February 1962 (Excerpts)

Comrade Kosygin reported on the discussion that had taken place between him and Comrade Leuschner; as the first problem, he dealt with the prospective plans for 1963-65. He touched upon the following questions: control numbers, 1963-1965; investment questions; balancing of industrial branches; coordination and reorganization of individual branches of industry.

He reported that the consultations had concluded in a decision to appoint groups of experts, who will prepare the appropriate materials and come to the negotiations without binding directives. These preparations should provide a basis for the 7-Year-Plan. Deadline for the work of the groups of experts: one month.

Comrade Khrushchev stressed that it is necessary to see the new bases for economic relations between the two states. It has to do with the unification of the economies of both states and the harmonizing of their plans. Whatever is decided upon must be maintained by both sides. The economies of both countries must be treated as a united whole, and all possibilities must be considered. He proposed that relations with the GDR be governed in the same way as, for example, the plan and settlement with the Ukraine are binding. He illustrated this strive-worthy condition by referring to a discussion that [Klement] Gottwald<sup>40</sup> had once led.

Comrade Ulbricht pointed out that until 1954, there had already been closer economic relations than is currently the case.

Comrade Khrushchev countered that the cooperation then was different, it was a mutual agreement. He is of the opinion, for example, that the question of investments in copper and potash must be agreed upon in the mutual plans, which [each side] must be obliged to keep.

Meeting the quantities agreed upon must be an obligation. Comrade Ulbricht voiced his agreement. He then made several supplementary remarks regarding economic-technical cooperation and suggested that a

direct cooperation of the [Party] secretaries working in this area should take place. Currently, things are not in order because very many matters regarding the transfer of patents and experience are being regulated by state security. He is of the opinion that the exchange and transfer of such things should take place through the "Committee for Coordination." He proposed that suitable guarantees be made for such cooperation.

Comrade Kosygin then reported on his conceptions for the plan in 1962, at which point he stressed that deliveries to the GDR have been fully agreed upon, but that the balance is still 215,000,000 rubles short.

He then drew attention to the following particulars:  
Activation of trade with Bonn to the maximum extent.  
Scrutiny of military expenditures.

The establishment of technically-based norms, esp. the alteration of norms.

The alignment of investments in crucial areas.

The standard of living in the GDR in comparison to the Federal Republic.

From the latest numbers he reached the conclusion that there are good possibilities for real propaganda in the GDR. He further stressed that great possibilities still exist to balance the plan in 1962, though with a larger credit from the Soviet Union. He suggested that it is better to discharge an investment with 6% than with 7%, but also to fulfill and surpass the plan. By all means, that is politically better. With regard to the standard of living, he drew attention to the fact that it seems expedient to give more in the form of direct wage increases and less through the social funds, because the latter is barely taken into account by the population.

Comrade Khrushchev interjected that after the 20<sup>th</sup> Plenum, the Soviet Union also went over to presenting the plan in such a fashion that a larger surplus [*Übererfüllung*] was guaranteed. That is of political consequence. Regarding the credit, he proposed that a suitable agreement be made and then signed in Leipzig.

Comrade Ulbricht expressed his agreement to the proposals and drew attention to the situation that had developed in terms of the individual matters in the most recent time period.

With regard to military expenditures, he referred in particular to the fact that it had become necessary to equip the army with new rail and radio equipment.

Comrade Khrushchev interjected that it cannot be that such an increase could arise on these grounds. One must check. It has to do with limiting the non-productive expenditures.

Comrade Ulbricht referred to the need to achieve an increase in production through additional material stimuli and reported on the struggle being waged to create technically-grounded work norms.

He pointed out that an acceleration of this struggle [to create technically-based work norms] is impossible.

Comrade Kosygin pointed out that the GDR is among those [states] with the highest norms in housing. In

discarding ruins and constructing new city centers one cannot proceed from the desirable shape of the city centers; instead, money must be placed first of all at the disposal of factories. In the GDR there are accommodations, city centers, etc., that are not planned for the Soviet Union until 1970. One must make reasonable use of the funds available. The main thing is to use these means for production.

Comrade Khrushchev said that he is upset that little is being invested in agriculture. We cannot accept special circumstances with regard to the large number of *kulaks*. If a decision [has to be made], whether city centers are to be built or investments made in agriculture, then the latter. One must promote production with all means and not simply pay more for the work units in the agriculture. In general, agriculture is the sore point of all the people's democracies. He then referred to the reorganization of the administration of agriculture in the Soviet Union that had been discussed at the March plenum.

In response to Comrade Ulbricht's letter, he said that the campaign for a peace treaty is settled. We will pursue the campaign aggressively, for the signing of a peace treaty. We will exploit every possibility for negotiations, but we will decide at what point to conclude it.

He is in agreement with a joint protest against the Western states' discrimination against the GDR. It would be incorrect, however, to strive, for example, for a general boycott in the field of sports. Stalin did that. One must make reasonable policy and not declare a boycott as a principle. That would only be to the advantage of the reactionary forces....

Comrade Ulbricht then referred to the articles being printed in the press about comrades who perished in the period of the Stalin-cult and stressed that this is of a certain importance to the GDR. Until now, nothing has been done in this direction, and there is no intention to do so. It is nevertheless necessary to agree upon the tactics in these cases.

There are cases in which the Soviet comrades do not understand our tactics — e.g., a delegation of writers who expressed the opinion that there is not enough freedom [in the GDR]. That was expressed at a writers' congress. The GDR is not publishing materials about Stalin's victims, and such books and publications will be refused by us — e.g., a book about the events in 1953 and the case of [Lavrentii] Beria.<sup>41</sup>

He voiced a request that in exchanges on the state level a certain order be created, so that — for example — writers cannot be used against the policies of the GDR. To this end, it is necessary that the party get involved.

Comrade Khrushchev agreed to speak with Comrade [Mikhail] Suslov and Comrade [Leonid] Il'ichev<sup>42</sup> about it.

[Source: Dölling, *Ambassador in Moscow*, "Note of a Discussion on 27 February 1962," 5 March 1962.

Marked, "For personal use only." PA/AA, Außenstelle

Berlin, MfAA, Ministerbüro (Winzer), G-A476.]

Douglas Selvage recently submitted his dissertation, 'Poland, the German Democratic Republic and the German Question, 1955-1967,' at Yale University and will be receiving his Ph.D. in December.

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<sup>2</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *We Now Know: Rethinking Cold War History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 149; Vladislav M. Zubok, *Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis (1958-1962)*, Cold War International History Project (CWIHP) Working Paper No. 6, (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May 1993), 22; Hope Millard Harrison, "The Bargaining Power of Weaker Allies in Bipolarity and Crisis: The Dynamics of Soviet-East German Relations, 1953-61," Ph.D. Diss., Columbia University, 1993, 239-40 and fn #625.

<sup>3</sup> Hope M. Harrison, *Ulbricht and the Concrete 'Rose': New Archival Evidence on the Dynamics of Soviet-East German Relations and the Berlin Crisis, 1958-61*, CWIHP Working Paper No. 5, (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May 1993), 55.

<sup>4</sup> See Douglas Selvage, "Khrushchev's Berlin Ultimatum: New Evidence from the Polish Archives," in this issue of the *Bulletin*.

<sup>5</sup> Harrison, *Ulbricht and his Concrete 'Rose'*, 28-9.

<sup>6</sup> Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War: From Stalin to Khrushchev* (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 190-94, 197.

<sup>7</sup> Harrison, *Ulbricht and his Concrete 'Rose'*, 16.

<sup>8</sup> Harrison, *Ulbricht and his Concrete 'Rose'*, 28-30. On the inter-German trade agreement, see Robert W. Dean, *West German Trade with the East: The Political Dimension* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 56-9; Ann Tusa, *The Last Division: A History of Berlin, 1945-1989* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1997), 219-20.

<sup>9</sup> "Maßnahmen zu den Analysen über den Warenaustausch mit den volksdemokratischen Ländern: Anlage Nr. 1 zum Protokoll Nr. 37 vom 25.7.61," Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der ehemaligen DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO BA), Berlin, J IV 2/2-778, pp. 26-7.

<sup>10</sup> "Protokoll Nr. 48/61 der Sitzung des Politbüros des Zentralkomitees," 12 September 1961. SAPMO BA, J IV 2/2-790, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Harrison, *Ulbricht and his Concrete 'Rose'*, 45-6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>13</sup> "Stenogram IX plenarnego posiedzenia Komitetu Centralnego Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej," 22 November 1961. Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), KC PZPR, sygn. 1240, p. 408.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Harrison, *Ulbricht and the 'Concrete Rose'*, 48.

<sup>15</sup> U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-63*, vol. XIV, 267-68. In the end there was no

embargo because the Soviets and East Germans did not block off access to West Berlin, and the other NATO allies opposed such a measure. See the "Memorandum of Conversation," 15 September 1961, in *ibid.*, 412.

<sup>16</sup> "Notatka z zapisu spotkania przywódców partii państw obozu socjalistycznego w Moskwie," in Jan Ptasinski, "Moje rozmowy z Władysławem Gomułką w latach 1960-1970," 1992, cz. II. Instytut Dokumentacji Historycznej Polskiej Rzeczypospolitej Ludowej (IDH-PRL), P II / 7b, k. 194, pp. 51-4; Zubok, *Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis*, 19-25. I have based my account of the Moscow meeting on notes that the Polish ambassador to Moscow from 1968-70, Jan Ptasinski, allegedly made from a transcript of the meeting that he found in the safe of the Polish embassy in Moscow. Ptasinski's notes compare favorably to the Soviet transcript cited by Vladislav Zubok in his work, and I have found Ptasinski's papers to be reliable in other instances by comparing them with documents in the former Central Committee Archives, now part of Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archive for Contemporary Documents) in Warsaw. IDH-PRL was set up as a private foundation by Polish scholars in the early 1990's to collect documentation and interviews from former communist officials who did not want to contribute their papers to the state archives.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> "Protokoll Nr. 48/61 der Sitzung des Politbüros des Zentralkomitees," 12 September 1961. SAPMO BA, J IV 2/2-790, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Robert M. Slusser, *The Berlin Crisis of 1961: Soviet-American Relations and the Struggle for Power in the Kremlin, June - November 1961* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), 358-60.

<sup>20</sup> Letter, Ulbricht to Gomułka, 23 September 1961. AAN, KC PZPR, p. 110, t. 15.

<sup>21</sup> Slusser, *The Berlin Crisis of 1961*, 346.

<sup>22</sup> "Memorandum of Conversation," 30 September 1961 (talks between Gromyko and Rusk), in NARA RG 59, "Conference Files, 1949-1963," Box 262, File "CF 1957, 16<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly, New York, September 1961, Memcons." Also see: "Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in France," 28 September 1961, in *FRUS, 1961-1963*, Vol. XIV, 439-41; and "Telegram from the Department of State to the Embassy in France," 2 October 1961, in *ibid.*, 456-460. On Bonn's opposition to discussion of matters relating to "European security" in the context of a Berlin settlement, see the attachment to the State Department's briefing book for

#### MASTNY NAMED SENIOR RESEARCH SCHOLAR

CWIHP is pleased to announce the recent appointment of Dr. Vojtech Mastny as a "Senior Research Scholar" at the Cold War International History Project. Following his award-winning book on "The Cold War and Soviet Insecurity: The Stalin Years," Dr. Mastny is currently working on a parallel history of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Concurrently he is heading a larger documentation project on NATO and the Warsaw Pact, jointly sponsored by CWIHP, the National Security Archive at The George Washington University, and the Center for Security Studies and Conflict Research at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (Zurich).

Adenauer's visit to Washington from 20-22 November 1961, entitled, "Position Paper: Arms Control in Relation to Berlin," 17 November 1961, in NARA, RG 59, "Conference Files, 1949-1963," Box 269, File "CF 1993—Adenauer Visit, Washington, 11/20-22/61.

<sup>23</sup> "Memorandum: Four Power Declaration," in the briefing book, "Adenauer Visit: Washington, D.C., November 20-22, 1961," in NARA, RG 59, "Conference Files, 1949-1963," Box 269, Files "CF 1993—Adenauer Visit, Washington, 11/20-22/61."

<sup>24</sup> "Memorandum of Conversation" (Kennedy-Adenauer Meeting), 22 November 1961, in *FRUS, 1961-63*, Vol. XIV, 620-27. Also see Letter, Kennedy to Prime Minister Macmillan, 22 November 1961, in *ibid.*, 632-634.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, "Quadripartite Foreign Ministers Meeting, Paris, 10-12 December, 1961," National Security Archive, File "Berlin Crisis—DOS FOIAs."

<sup>26</sup> On curtailing Ulbricht's influence, see Harrison, *Ulbricht and his Concrete 'Rose'*, 55. On China's possible role, see Zubok, *Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis*, 24-5.

<sup>27</sup> Harrison, *Ulbricht and his Concrete 'Rose'*, 55.

<sup>28</sup> Zubok and Pleshakov, *Inside the Kremlin's Cold War*, 249.

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Erwin Weit, *Ostblock intern: 13 Jahre Dolmetscher für die polnische Partei- und Staatsführung* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1970), 45-6.

<sup>30</sup> On Khrushchev's Comecon reform proposals and Gomulka's "triangle," see "Relacja Władysława Tykocinskiego: zdradzone tajemnice," *Na antenie* 41 (21 August 1966), I; Henryk Różanski, *Spojrzenie na RWPG: Wspomnienia, dokumenty, refleksje 1949-1988* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1990); Jan Ptasinski, *Drugi zwrot: Gomulka w szczytu powodzenia* (Warsaw: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1988), 169-72; Beate Ihme-Tuchel, *Das 'nördliche Dreieck': Die Beziehungen zwischen der DDR, der Tschechoslowakei und Polen in den Jahren 1954 bis 1962* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1994), 305-6, 344-46. For the latest on the New Economic System, see Jeffrey Kopstein, *The Politics of Economic Decline in East Germany, 1945-1989* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

<sup>31</sup> See the letter from Walter Ulbricht to Hans Rodenberg, 23 October 1971, reprinted in Peter Przybylski, *Tatort Politbüro*, Vol. II (Berlin: Rowohlt Verlag, 1991), 351-52. Ulbricht wrote: "When Khrushchev came to the GDR, he criticized me all the way to Magdeburg because I was not a sufficiently obedient corn boy [*Mais-Jünger*]."

<sup>32</sup> L. Cieslik, Moscow, "Notatka z rozmowy z A. Adzubem," 7 May 1962. AAN, KC PZPR, p. 116, t. 40.

<sup>33</sup> Adzhubei claimed in the course of several conversations in Germany that Ulbricht would not live much longer; he had cancer. Adzhubei's statement, Ulbricht later wrote to Hans Rodenberg, "had not improved" his relations with Khrushchev (see footnote #25 above). For the latest on Adzhubei's visit to West Germany, see Daniel Kosthorst, "Sowjetische Geheimpolitik in Deutschland? Chruschtschow und die Adschubej-Mission 1964," *Vierteljahrshefte zur Zeitgeschichte* 44 (1996), 257-293.

<sup>34</sup> From this point forth in the document, Rusk's name was rendered as "Rask."

<sup>35</sup> Spaak visited Moscow on September 19. Khrushchev apparently suggested that he had never "placed a deadline on Western acceptance of Soviet demands for a German peace treaty and free-city status for West Berlin." Slusser, *The Berlin Crisis of 1961*, 229-30.

<sup>36</sup> In February 1962, the Soviets "demanded exclusive use of the air corridors, ... buzzed allied aircraft and dropped metallic chaff to

interfere with Western radar and air traffic control." Tusa, *The Last Division*, 347.

<sup>37</sup> Although it is unclear to which interview Khrushchev was referring, Kennedy did write to Khrushchev through a confidential channel on 16 October 1961: "This area [Berlin] would also be rendered less peaceful if the maintenance of the West's vital interests were to become dependent on the whims of the East German regime. Some of Mr. Ulbricht's statements on this subject have not been consistent with your reassurances or even his own — and I do not believe that either of us wants a constant state of doubt, tension and emergency in this area, which would require an even larger military build-up on both sides." Letter from President Kennedy to Chairman Khrushchev, Hyannis Port, 16 October 1961, U.S. Department of State, ed., *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961-63, Volume VI: Kennedy-Khrushchev Exchanges* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1996), 41.

<sup>38</sup> On Chinese criticism of Khrushchev's failure to conclude a peace treaty, see Harrison, *Ulbricht and his Concrete 'Rose'*, 53.

<sup>39</sup> Although the archives of the former East German Ministry for Foreign Affairs (*Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten*) remain in Berlin, they are now part of the FRG's Foreign Office Archives.

<sup>40</sup> Former General Secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

<sup>41</sup> Lavrentii Beria, head of the NKVD/KGB and heir-apparent to Stalin, executed in 1953. After his arrest in late June 1953, Beria was accused of having been willing to give up the socialist GDR in favor of a neutral, reunified, bourgeois, and demilitarized Germany in return for substantial reparations from the FRG. Khrushchev and his other rivals in the Soviet leadership had justified his arrest and execution in part on these grounds. Gaddis, *We Now Know*, 136.

<sup>42</sup> Both Suslov and Il'ichev were Central Committee secretaries with responsibilities in the fields of ideology and propaganda.