

**October 30, 1961**

**Letter from Ulbricht and the SED CC Delegation to  
the CPSU 22nd Congress in Moscow to Khrushchev**

**Citation:**

"Letter from Ulbricht and the SED CC Delegation to the CPSU 22nd Congress in Moscow to Khrushchev", October 30, 1961, Wilson Center Digital Archive, SED Archives, IfGA, ZPA, NL, 182/1206. CWIHP Working Paper No. 5, "Ulbricht and the Concrete 'Rose.'" Translated for CWIHP by Hope Harrison.  
<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/117196>

**Summary:**

Representing the SED CC delegation, Ulbricht writes to Khrushchev requesting a meeting with the CPSU CC presidium, for which he outlines the topics necessary for discussion. Topics include the West Berlin question and the need for an agreement between Western powers and the USSR, and a treaty between the GDR and West Germany to establish territorial sovereignty.

**Credits:**

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

**Original Language:**

German

**Contents:**

Translation - English

To the  
First Secretary  
of the Central Committee  
of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union  
Comrade Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchev

Moscow

Dear Comrade Nikita Sergeevich!

The members of the SED CC delegation to 22nd CPSU Party Congress request a meeting with representatives of the CPSU CC presidium and CPSU to discuss our further tactics.

As preparation for this discussion, we are sending you in the following several thoughts on our evaluation of the situation and several proposals for further measures.

I.

The resolution of the Warsaw Pact states on the effective safe-guarding of the GDR border as well as its capital against West Berlin has been implemented with success. It has proven tactically correct to carry out the various measures gradually.

Also the decision of August 23, 1961, to reduce the number of control points on the border with West Berlin to 7, including only 1 control point for foreigners, was confirmed by developments thus far as necessary and correct. Experience has shown that it is virtually impossible to check Germans and foreigners simultaneously with a greater number of control points.

The Soviet Ambassador, Pervukhin, on his part raised objections against these measures with an appeal for a 4-power resolution. We, however, could not accept this argument. We are guided by the tactical point of view of moving gradually just so far with our security measures that there will not be serious complications.

The situation on the border normalized itself soon after the implementation of our measures. The civilian representatives of the Western powers also produced their personal identification as identification of themselves. The U.S. Ambassador in Bonn, who specially came to Berlin to try out whether he could cross the border, made no exception to this. Due to showing his employment identification, which legitimated him as the U.S. Ambassador in Bonn, he could pass unhindered.

In the meantime, the Bonn government and certain circles of the Pentagon have carried out a counter-thrust in order to reverse at least partially the results of August 13. With this, it is obviously the intention of the aggressive circles of the Western powers to make a satisfactory resolution of the West Berlin problem impossible through the creation of certain fait accomplis.

The counter-thrust of the Western powers was introduced with the public statement of US Foreign Minister Rusk, about the "rights" of the Western powers in the GDR capital. Immediately after this General Clay organized the well-known provocation on the border with West Berlin. It was announced publicly that the USA would bring by air to West Berlin in large or small groups hundreds of non-commissioned officers of US troops stationed in West Germany and other European countries from there [West Berlin] to drive around in the capital of the GDR

without being checked. These provocative actions have begun already.

We know the guidelines of the French commandant in which a reinforced visit by members of NATO occupation forces in uniform and in civilian attire are announced in the GDR capital. Army members in uniform or in civilian attire are told not to show any identification in crossing the border into the GDR capital. The vehicle driver--even when he is a German--should refuse to show his documents. In the guidelines of the French commandant the army members are instructed further to drive through the control points on the border of the GDR capital without stopping. It should also be attempted to break through other control points which are not meant for entry and exit by foreigners.

The provocative character of the proceedings of the Western powers, which undermines the sovereignty of the GDR and is supposed to hinder a peaceful resolution of the West Berlin issue, clearly results from this order.

These actions of the military officials of the Western powers show that obviously we can only arrive at negotiations on the peaceful resolution of the West Berlin question when the basic preconditions of future negotiations are agreed upon to begin with. This means that it is necessary to establish to begin with the sovereignty of the GDR and of its capital.

We request in this connection that the representatives of the USSR categorically demand in talks with representatives of the Western powers that the control journeys of US-military patrols on the Helmstedt-Berlin stretch [of the transit route] be stopped immediately. The present situation in which jeeps with US control officers are accompanied by a Soviet vehicle does not improve the situation. Through this is raised much more the impression of a legalization of this patrol route on the autobahn. This issue is so important to us, because the Western powers want to create through these regular control trips a fait accompli aimed at creating an extraterritorial corridor between West Germany and West Berlin, demanded by West German militarists.

In the last talks between Comrade Khrushchev and myself, as also at the meeting of the first secretaries of the communist and workers' parties, it was agreed that before the conclusion of a peace treaty, there must be an agreement between the Soviet Union and the Western powers on the West Berlin question. The result of this agreement and the guarantee statement of the Soviet Union and the GDR on West Berlin then must be worked into the peace treaty with the GDR.

II.

Since Comrade Khrushchev declared in the report that the Soviet Union would not insist on signing a peace treaty absolutely by December 31, 1961 if the Western powers show readiness for the resolution of the German problem, it is now necessary to agree on further tactics.

To advance the process of political differences in West Germany, we propose that the GDR appeal again to the West German Federal Republic with a proposal for an agreement.

With this proposal, we believe that it is necessary, as long as the establishment of normal diplomatic relations between the two German states is not yet possible, to agree at least on a minimum of measures for the safe-guarding of peace and the development of normal relations.

This minimum could be created through the realization of the following proposals:

1. Both German states mutually pledge to respect sovereignty on their territorial areas. The borders between the two German states should be marked so as to eliminate the possibility of any occasion for border conflicts.
2. Both German states enter into negotiations on their positions on the contents of the German peace treaty.
3. Both German states renounce the atomic armament of their armed forces as well as the production of atomic weapons. Both German states pledge to stop arming.
4. Both German states support the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between the states of the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Both German states support their admission into the UN.
5. The representatives of the two German states begin with negotiations on the form of their relations in the spirit of a confederation. These negotiations should lead to agreements, among others, on the following basic issues:
  - a) Agreement on the establishment of correct relations between the governments of the two German states.
  - b) Agreement on the recognition of bilateral passports as preconditions of a contractual regulation of travel.
  - c) Agreement on the abandonment of mutual discrimination of the representatives of both states in other states.
  - d) Conclusion of a trade treaty between the proper ministries of both German governments.

In the GDR proposal to the West German Federal Republic, it was emphasized particularly that from the stand point of the interests of the German people, as well as the interests of peace in Europe, a militarily neutral Germany is the only way. These agreements, which later could be broadened into the German peace plan proposed by the GDR, should be in force until the future reunification of the German nation.

### III.

The government in Bonn and the West German militarists are exerting strong pressure on the Western powers to prevent negotiations and to prevent the conclusion of a peace treaty and the peaceful settlement of the West Berlin question. We must work against this pressure of the Bonn government on the Western powers through unified measures; this means that we must exercise even stronger pressure on the Western powers. While we carry out the following measures, we will promote the understanding of the Western powers that any further delay of serious discussions in the end will only undermine their negotiating position, since hopes for negotiations over any rights of the Western powers in the capital of the GDR are entirely illusory.

The situation has developed in such a way that it has obviously become necessary to implement a series of measures for the elimination of several remnants of the war in the capital of the GDR so as to create the preconditions for the conclusion of a peace treaty.

In light of the latest provocations by the U.S. military authorities on the territory of

the capital of the GDR, it is necessary as the next step to create an order at the border of the capital of the GDR with West Berlin so as to paralyze any violation of the sovereignty of the GDR. The commandant of the Soviet garrison in Berlin, Comrade Colonel Sobolyov, and the Foreign Minister, Comrade Gromyko, have demanded of the representatives of the Western powers that they respect the sovereignty of the GDR. To make this demand realizable, the preparation of the following next steps is necessary:

The enforcement of the identification obligation of all military and civilian personnel of the three Western powers at the checkpoints at the border with West Berlin by the Border Police or People's Police of the GDR.

If the representatives of the Western powers should refuse to show their personal identification for the purpose of identification to the German Border Police, then the border with West Berlin--with the exception of the transit route between West Berlin and West Germany--is to be closed until there is a result from the government negotiations. This step would establish that these measures should prevent conflict in Berlin until the conclusion of a peace treaty. For the entry of citizens of the West German Federal Republic as well as foreigners into the capital of the GDR, there are GDR border control points in the west, north, south and east of the Republic, as well as at Schönefeld airport. West Berlin citizens, who possess a permit from the presidium of the People's Police can enter through the Invalidenstrasse control point. The step proposed by us in no way touches upon the statement of the USA dealing with the safe-guarding of the route between West Berlin and West Germany or the so-called freedom of West Berlin.

What will probably happen after the implementation of these measures? We can assume that Bonn and NATO will answer with a selective embargo. The resolution of Bonn to begin now, under the pretext of the alleged delay of payments by the GDR, the selective throttling of trade between the GDR and West Germany shows us how West Germany and the Western powers can react.

These measures settle the preconditions for a peaceful settlement of the West Berlin question. After it is made clear that a recognition of any kind of rights of the imperialistic Western powers in the capital of the GDR is out of the question, the diplomatic negotiations between the representatives of the foreign ministers of the USSR and the USA can concentrate on real negotiations over the peaceful settlement of the West Berlin question.

Moreover, it is certain that the debates over West Germany's Deutschlandpolitik will become sharper.

It is to be assumed that in this situation the Soviet Union must stop sending mail to the area of the Soviet monument in front of the Reichstag and stop further participation in the guarding of the three condemned criminals in Spandau.

The Soviet representative in the Air Security Center could still remain at first, although his presence there--in so far as the interests of the GDR are an issue--is of no advantage.

#### IV.

So that Bonn and the Western powers do not manage to postpone negotiations on the German peace treaty and the peaceful settlement of the West Berlin question for a

long time, furthermore, we think it is advisable that the conference of the foreign ministers of the Warsaw Treaty, which was originally agreed upon for the end of November, be carried out in spite of the changed situation at the beginning of December. The SED Politburo will convey to the CPSU CC Presidium in the middle of November of this year its remarks on the Soviet proposal of a peace treaty, which we received in 1959.

The agenda of the foreign ministers' conference should be changed somewhat. We imagine something like the following agenda:

1. Information on the state of or the preparation of the negotiations between the Soviet Union and the Western powers.
2. Issues of the peace treaty and the settlement of the West Berlin question.
3. Appointment of a commission for the final preparation of a peace treaty and the documents related to it.

The publication of a communique on the foreign ministers' conference could contribute to increasing the readiness of the Western powers for negotiations. The foreign ministers' conference would also be desirable for the political orientation of the population in both German states.

We believe it is advisable that after the beginning of the negotiations between the USSR and the USA for an agreed period of time, the city parliament of Greater-Berlin (the Democratic part) resolve in accord with the GDR constitution that the laws and orders of the Volkskammer, the Council of State, and the Government of the GDR have full validity immediately in the GDR capital.

It could be objected to this that the West Berlin Senate and the Bonn government could take such a resolution as a pretext to declare the membership of West Berlin in the West German Federal Republic through an analogous resolution.

The interest of the Western powers in maintaining the occupation regime in West Berlin, which would be hardly compatible with the recognition of a resolution on the membership of West Berlin to West Germany, speaks against such a fear. It is more useful for the Western powers to maintain the special position of West Berlin and with this at least the appearance of the continued existence of a four-power status in Berlin.

We must expect that in the next months the situation on the issue of air traffic will be exacerbated. The provocative non-stop flights of U.S. transport planes and helicopters in the air space over the GDR capital disturbs air security, threatening the population and must be a demonstration of the policy of strength against the GDR. We draw it to your attention that the representatives of the Western powers have presumed the right to prohibit the flight of an airplane of the Netherlands' Air Company through the air corridors to Berlin and further to Leipzig.

We must expect that the time is coming in which due to the provocations of the Western powers, the representatives of the USSR in the Air Security Center will be forced to leave this institution under protest. Therefore, it is necessary to complete the GDR Air Security Center quickly. Then, after the withdrawal of the Soviet officers from the Air Security Center in West Berlin, the Western powers must establish connection with the GDR Air Security Center.

V.

We suppose that the talks and negotiations between the USSR and the USA and later between the USSR and the three powers will concentrate practically on the issues of the transit routes to West Berlin and the elimination of the occupation status in West Berlin, the gradual decrease of the Western powers' military forces stationed in West Berlin, the removal of West German offices, the cessation of the diversionary and espionage activities of West Berlin, the cessation of the activity of U.S. radio stations in West Berlin, and finally guarantees for a West Berlin cleansed of any of the remnants of the Second World War and the institutions of the cold war. In addition, there remains on the agenda only the elimination of the remnants of the war such as the military missions which practice their mischief in the GDR.

x

x

x

The issues of the renunciation by both German states of atomic arms as well as the production of atomic weapons, the conclusion of a non-aggression treaty between the two German states and the creation of an atomic-weapon-free zone in Europe can play a role in the negotiations. Partial agreements over this will be possible, however, only after the conclusion of a peace treaty.

## VI.

The non-conclusion of a peace treaty in this year and the exacerbation of relations between the two German states threatens the economic plan of the GDR of 1962.

1. The Bonn government has stated that trade with the GDR would be decreased and has seen to it that the least number of treaties possible be concluded on essential materials. The material orders for production in the next year were supposed to have been carried out several months ago. So, we can conclude no treaties with West Germany for important items, and the USSR also thus far has concluded no treaties with us on these items since this material belongs to the special reserve of the USSR Council of Ministers, which must be received only with the severing of economic relations. So, since the situation has changed and we must expect for the time being not a full severing of economic relations, but a selective embargo, we propose to change the original agreements between the Soviet Union and the GDR and that the materials from the special reserve which are necessary for the fulfillment of the GDR economic plan be placed at our disposal in the framework of the plan by the USSR foreign trade ministry. If in the course of 1962, additional supplies from West Germany come, then this can be settled between the two planning commissions.

We further draw it to your attention that the reserves for those raw materials and materials which the USSR bought in third countries for us are developed only for the first half year of 1962. Due to the dragging out of the conclusion of the peace treaty, this term will no longer suffice.

2. As a result of the losses in the first half of this year through the open border, the 1961 plan will probably not be fulfilled on several important items. In machine building we remain about 2.5% and in the building and construction industry about 5.3% under the plan. There is also the fact that by the movement of factories from the border areas, by rearrangements in the traffic in Berlin and in the border areas, as well as the increase in defense preparedness, additional demands for investment resulted.

3. The proposal of the economic plan for 1962 envisages an increase in industrial production of 6.5 percent, an increase in workers' productivity in the nationally owned

and central industries of 6.3 percent, and an increase in the stock of goods for the supply of the population by 5%.

The plan provides for the liberation of the GDR national economy from West German disturbances. The establishment of the economic cooperation of the GDR with the USSR was agreed on for important plan items. With regard to the process of the specialization and cooperation in machine building, there are already serious arrears. We have precise information only partially about the wishes of the USSR with regard to machine building products, investment needs, etc.

In the proposal of the economic plan, a decrease in investment intentions is envisaged. Relative to the performance of 1961, a 6.5 percent growth in investments is envisaged. The investment means will be concentrated on making the economy free from disturbances, and the further development of energy and raw material bases, especially coal, metallurgy, the chemical industry and home and city building. The volume of investment is about 2,730 million DM in 1961 and about 3,136 million DM in 1962 lower than was foreseen in the Seven-Year-plan.

4. Imports will increase in 1962 by about 13% compared to the 1961 planned performance. Export supplies will increase correspondingly. It is not possible to equalize the balance of payments for the year 1962 with regard to the USSR and the other socialist countries. The total negative amount in the balance of payments of 1962, according to present calculations, amounts to 3060 million hard currency DM; of this 2000 million hard currency DM with the Soviet Union, 1000 hard currency DM with the other socialist countries, and 60 million hard currency DM with the capitalist economic area.

We must consider further that probably in 1962 in connection with the preparation of the peace treaty, the trade relations with the West German Federal Republic will be put on the basis of trade between two countries. From then on, the GDR will pay for its goods in inner-German trade prices which are above world market prices. With the changing of trade to the basis of two German states, a foreseen loss in the amount of 250 million DM will accrue to the GDR.

Since in the current talks, further developments can be estimated in connection with the preparation of a peace treaty, it will be necessary to agree on the proposed GDR economic plan for 1962 between the leaders of the planning commission of the GDR and the chairman of the planning commission of the USSR and then to conclude on the governmental level the negotiations and to reach agreements on the regulation of debt. It appears that the safe-guarding of the GDR as a bastion of peace is costly both for the population of the GDR as well as for the Soviet Union and the states of the socialist camp.

We will send the proposal of the 1962 economic plan to the USSR government in November.

With communist greetings! The delegation  
of the Politburo  
of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany to the 22nd CPSU Party Congress  
W. Ulbricht, First Secretary

Moscow, October 30, 1961