

Soviet Reply

To Identic Notes Dated August 17 of United States, United Kingdom, and France on Berlin, August 18, 1961

In connection with the note of the Government of the United States of America of August 17, 1961, the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics considers it necessary to state the following:

The Soviet Government fully understands and supports the actions of the Government of the German Democratic Republic which established effective control on the border with West Berlin in order to bar the way for subversive activity being carried out from West Berlin against the G.D.R. and other countries of the socialist community. . . .

West Berlin has been transformed into a center of subversive activity diversion, and espionage, into a center of political and economic provocations against the G.D.R., the Soviet Union, and other socialist countries. Former and present West Berlin municipal leaders have cynically called West Berlin an "arrow in the living body of the German Democratic Republic," a "front city," a "violation of tranquillity," the "cheapest atom bomb put in the center of a socialist state." . . .

However, West Berlin authorities and the occupation organs of the three powers did not lift a finger to put an end to this criminal activity. . . .

The question is, have such actions anything in common with the observation of the four-power status established in Berlin immediately after the defeat of Hitlerite Germany, to which the note of the Government of the U.S.A. refers? One must have an exceptionally great sense of humor to affirm that the activity carried on in West Berlin corresponds to four-power obligations. . . .

The Government of the U.S.A. should be well informed on the fact that, with the collaboration of the occupation forces, the ruling circles of the F.R.G. have turned West Berlin into the principal base of uninterrupted economic diversions against the G.D.R. At the expense of taxes collected from the population of the F.R.G., a speculative rate for the exchange of West marks for the currency of the G.D.R. was arbitrarily established and artificially maintained in West Berlin. There has never been so shameless a speculation in currency in any other city in the world as in West Berlin-and this under the protection of the occupation authorities. Buying up in the G.D.R. and export to West Berlin and the F.R.G. of valuable goods and foodstuffs was organized on an enormous scale; this inflicted colossal damage upon the population and national economy of the G.D.R. The workers of the G.D.R. were annually forced to pay at least 3 1/2 billion marks for the open border with West Berlin. . . .

The Government organs and concerns of the F.R.G. led from West Berlin an entire army of recruiters who, by means of deception, bribery, and blackmail, instigated a certain part of the residents of the G.D.R. to migrate to West Germany. There, these people were compelled to enter into service in the Bundeswehr and to work in the war-production industry; they were drawn into various subversive organizations. . . .

Slandrous propaganda of incitement, inimical to the Soviet Union, the G.D.R., and other socialist countries, has been and is being systematically conducted by radio and television from West Berlin. The radio and television centers in West Berlin are totally subordinated to one task: to disseminate enmity among peoples, to incite war psychosis, to attempt to organize disorders, and to transmit enciphered instructions to agents of Western intelligence systems. . . .

The G.D.R. has displayed, over the course of many years, great tolerance in the face of such a completely disgraceful and impermissible situation. Implementing its consistently peace-loving and democratic policy, it has borne enormous sacrifices to facilitate the achievement of agreement between the two German states on the questions of peaceful settlement and reunification of Germany on peace-loving and democratic foundations.

Nevertheless, and particularly recently, following the Introduction of proposals on the immediate conclusion of a peace treaty -with Germany and on normalization on that basis of the situation in West Berlin, subversive activity from West Berlin against the G.D.R. and other socialist countries has assumed even greater proportions. At the same time, the enemies of peace and tranquillity in this area have not missed even one opportunity to interfere with the plans for socialist construction in the G.D.R., to hinder the rise in well-being of its population, and, by every means and without stopping at anything, to complicate the situation in the Republic. . . .

The Government of the U.S.A. attempts in its note to represent its effort to perpetuate the occupation of West Berlin (and this 16 years after the end of the war) as a concern for the Germans and almost as a concrete expression of the right to self-determination. Such attempts in the final analysis cannot be taken seriously. And if the taking of defensive measures on the G.D.R. border with West Berlin creates certain temporary inconveniences for the city's population, blame for this rests entirely with the occupation authorities and the F.R.G. Government, which have done everything to prevent improvement of the atmosphere in this area in accordance with the legitimate interests of all states. Thus, the protest made in the note of the Government of the U.S.A. is without foundation and is categorically rejected by the Soviet Government.

As was already stated, measures taken by the Government of the G.D.R. are temporary. The Soviet Government repeatedly has emphasized that the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and normalization on such a basis of the situation in West Berlin will not infringe the interests of any of the parties and will contribute to the cause of peace and security of all peoples. To this end it appeals to the Government of the U.S.A.

Source:

from *The Department of State Bulletin*, LXV, No. 1158 (September 4, 1961), pp. 397-400.