

July 1, 1953

Telephonogram from Miroshnichenko and Lunkov to Semenov, [early July 1953]

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Summary:

On 17 June, the Soviet military had stopped all cross-sector travel, causing widespread resentment among many East Germans who worked in the Western sectors or crossed them on their way to work. Under pressure from the East German population in the days following the uprising, SED leaders and local Soviet High Commission officials urged Semenov, then in Moscow for the Extraordinary CPSU Plenum, to normalize the traffic situation in Berlin. Semenov, following Molotov's orders, informed Ulbricht that the question of free movement across the sector border "must be decided by the [German] comrades themselves, taking the situation into account." On 7 July, tram and metro traffic between the sectors in Berlin was restored.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

TELEPHONOGRAM

To Cde. SEMENOV
Deliver immediately.

In connection with the events of 17 June, movement has been halted for all means of transport and pedestrians across the sector border between East and West Berlin, as well as between the GDR and East Berlin by way of West Berlin.

At the present time, the metro, the city railroad and tramway in East and West Berlin are functioning in isolation, which has brought about dissatisfaction from the inhabitants of the GDR and East Berlin. Until June 17, the city railroad was used by 83,000 workers and employees residing in the territory of the GDR adjoining the Western Sectors of Berlin, yet working in East Berlin. Now they are using buses, steam-driven trains and other means of transportation to commute to work, for which, moreover, they have to make several transfers. For this commute, instead of taking 30-40 minutes as before, they now have to travel up to 2-3 hours one-way.

The workers, employees and other sectors of the population are expressing serious dissatisfaction with the current situation and ask the GDR government to change the current system of transportation. In connection with this, we believe it useful to implement on the morning of 6 July the following measures:

1. During morning and evening hours, organize electric-train routes from the GDR to East Berlin and back without stopping in the western sectors of the city.
2. In order to improve the movement of western sector inhabitants who work in the east sector of Berlin and vice-versa, open, in addition to the 3 existing access-control stations at the sector border, an additional 5 stations.
3. For people residing in GDR communities adjoining the western sectors of Berlin, but working in West Berlin, organize electric-train routes from the GDR to specific stations in West Berlin.

The friends (Cde. Ulbricht) are completely in agreement with the measures we are proposing and ask that they be informed today of the decisions regarding these proposals, so that they can announce these decisions on the radio and bring calm to the population.

With regard to the decision of the SED CC Politburo to request the Supreme Commissar of the USSR in Germany to open the sector border, Ulbricht said that this question can be examined following the implementation of the aforementioned measures.

We ask for your instructions.

(Miroshnichenko)
(Lunkov)