

April 18, 1953

**Memorandum on the German Question, from Georgi
Pushkin and Mikhail Gribanov to Vyacheslav
Molotov**

Citation:

"Memorandum on the German Question, from Georgi Pushkin and Mikhail Gribanov to Vyacheslav Molotov", April 18, 1953, Wilson Center Digital Archive, AVP RF, f. 082, op. 41, pap. 271, d. 19, ll. 13-19. Translated by Daniel Rozas.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/111329>

Summary:

Memorandum summarizing the state of discussions between the Soviet Union and the Western powers on various issues regarding Germany, including political, economic and unification issues.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

TOP SECRET

Copy #4

To Comrade V. M. Molotov

Memorandum on the German Question

The state of the German question at the present time.

Over the course of 1952 there was an exchange of diplomatic notes between the Soviet government and the governments of the USA, England and France regarding a peace treaty with Germany, German unification, and the establishment of an all-German government. Our latest note of 23 August proposed to convene in the immediate future a conference of representatives of the four powers, with the participation of representatives of the GDR and West Germany and with the following agenda:

- a) Drafting a peace treaty with Germany;
- b) Establishing an all-German government;
- c) Carrying out free all-German elections and [establishing] a commission to ascertain the existence of conditions in Germany for carrying out such elections, as well as this commission's composition, functions, and authorities.

The Soviet government also proposed to discuss the matter of the withdrawal of occupation forces in Germany during this conference.

In the reply notes of 23 September, the governments of the USA, England and France affirmed their previous position that negotiations of the Four Powers can be commenced only on the matter of organizing free elections. The position of the three powers on the German question can be summarized as follows: "Until elections are held, there can be no establishment of an all-German government and no unification of Germany. Discussion of the conditions of the peace treaty with Germany is impossible without the establishment of an all-German government." (From the USA government note of 23.IX.52).

The governments of the three powers also insisted that prior to elections an "impartial commission" must carry out investigations in Germany and verify the existence of conditions necessary for free elections. If the commission finds that such conditions do not exist, then it will recommend to the governments of the four powers steps that must be taken in order to create such conditions. Noting the negative attitude of the three powers toward the people's democratic order in the GDR, this demand essentially means that the three powers are using the condition of carrying out all-German elections as a way to move toward changing the people's democratic order in the GDR.

Since September 1952, the exchange of notes on the German question has ceased.

At the present time, judging from reports in the press and the speeches of official representatives of the three powers, the governments of the USA, England and France are fearful of new active steps that may be taken by the Soviet Government on the German question. Therefore, they are trying in advance to set forth conditions obviously unacceptable to us, in case the question of negotiations between the four

powers on the German question arises. This is clear both from the communiqué on American-German negotiations of 10 April and from Eisenhower's speech on [16 April] at the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

One should also bear in mind the fact that on 19 March of this year, the Bundestag ratified the Bonn and Paris military treaties, and at the end of April these treaties will be presented for ratification in the House of State Representatives of the Bonn parliament [Bundesrat]. We have not yet made any statements regarding the ratification of these treaties by the Bonn parliament.

On the activation of our policy on the German question. In our opinion, it seems expedient to discuss the following proposals:

1. To invite to Moscow an official government delegation from the GDR, headed by Otto Grotewohl.

Since the establishment of the GDR (October 1949), there has been no official visit by a GDR government delegation to Moscow, while GDR government delegations have visited Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Hungary and Rumania. The arrival of a GDR government delegation in Moscow could be used to express our current position on the German question. It would be useful to link the economic measures planned by the Soviet Government with respect to the GDR with the arrival of this delegation. Certainly, the arrival of the delegation would increase the authority of the German Democratic Republic.

As a result of the talks with the GDR delegation, the following could be carried out:

Regarding political questions

- a) Publish a declaration which could state the unity of the positions of the governments of the USSR and the GDR on the importance of an urgent conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and the formation of an all-German government, and provide a short evaluation of the ratification of the Bonn and Paris treaties by the Bundestag.

As a new step in the German question directed toward the unification of Germany, we could propose the urgent formation of a provisional all-German government composed of representatives appointed by the parliaments of the GDR and West Germany, while preserving the existing governments of the GDR and West Germany. The provisional government could be assigned the functions of examining and preparing recommendations for ways of uniting Germany, as well as examining questions pertaining to interests shared by the GDR and West Germany, the representation of Germany at international conferences, German citizenship, the exchange of goods between the GDR and West Germany, postal and telegraph communications, railroad and water links, circulation of currency, scientific, cultural and technical cooperation, and other questions of mutual interest to all of the German people. The decisions of the provisional all-German government would be binding for the governments of the GDR and West Germany.

At the same time, to assign to the provisional government the [task of] preparing the draft of an all-German election law for carrying out free democratic elections throughout all of Germany, without any foreign interference, based on the election laws of the GDR and West Germany, as well as the election law of the Weimar Republic from 6 March 1924. The draft of this law must be ratified by the People's Deputies of the GDR and the West German Bundestag. Under certain circumstances there could be a direct plebiscite of the German people regarding the creation of the aforementioned provisional all-German government as the first real step toward the unification of Germany.

b) Announce that the Soviet government and the government of the GDR have agreed, with the goal of further development of friendly relations, to reorganize their diplomatic missions in Moscow and Berlin into embassies.

c) Declare that the Soviet government, abiding by the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the GDR and by its resolve to act in a manner of cooperation and friendship, as well as bearing in mind that the mutual relations between the Soviet Union and the GDR are imbued with a spirit of mutual trust, has determined that it is possible to reorganize the Soviet Control Commission into the Soviet Commission on German Affairs, with reduced staff and limited functions.

d) Announce the decision of the Soviet government to fulfill the request of the GDR government to set free a significant number of German prisoners of war remaining in the USSR, who had been sentenced for crimes against the Soviet people and the Soviet government.

Regarding economic questions

a) Transfer to the GDR government the remaining 33 Chief Soviet Foreign Property [Glavsovzagranimushchestva] enterprises (with the exception of "Wismut") on condition of payment for their value with shipments of goods and, in part, with available [GDR] Marks with a payment plan for deferrals.

b) Announce in the joint declaration with the GDR government that both governments, guided by the desire to act in the spirit of cooperation and friendship, agree to broaden and strengthen economic and cultural ties between the Soviet Union and the GDR, in particular, in the fields of scientific-technical cooperation, the broadening of postal-telegraph communications, railroad links, the exchange of specialists, training of German students at leading educational institutions in the USSR, a broad exchange of scientific information, literature, scientific delegations, figures in culture and art, as well as delegations of workers in agriculture, medicine, education and youth.

c) Announce also the main contents of the Soviet government resolutions on economic questions, already adopted in April of this year.

2. Within 2-3 weeks following the talks with the GDR government delegation and the publication of the aforementioned documents, send Soviet government diplomatic notes to the governments of the USA, England and France, which, after affirming our position on the importance of an urgent conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and the reinstatement of German unity, and laying out our opinion on the ratification of the Bonn and Paris military agreements, would set forth a proposal for the immediate establishment of a provisional all-German government with the aforementioned functions, while preserving the existing governments of the GDR and West Germany.

3. At the same time, it would be expedient to activate a GDR government struggle for German unity and for a peace treaty, proceeding from the aforementioned Soviet-German declaration.

Cde. Pushkin

Cde. Gribanov

0101/GP

18.IV.53

1,2 - to Cde. Molotov

3,4 - to file.

Witness: [signature]