

July 9, 1953

Memorandum from Georgi Pushkin to Andrei Vyshinskii Regarding Proposals Made by Semyonov, Sokolovskii, and Yudin

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Summary:

This memorandum outlines proposals for measures that should be taken in order to implement a new political course in the GDR, with a focus on economic development and increased standard of living.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

[....]

Proposals of Cdes. Sokolovskii, Semyonov and Yudin Measures undertaken

1. Firmly and consistently to implement a new political course projected in the Resolution of the Soviet Government of [2] June 1953 on improving the health of the political state of the GDR. This proposal does not necessitate the adoption of new measures and is a general statement of intent.

2. To take urgent measures to improve radically the supply of food to the GDR populace through the provision of appropriate aid to the GDR by the Soviet Union and countries of people's democracy. Moreover, it should be taken into account that the aid measures taken up to this point, including the additional supplies sent by a resolution of the Soviet Government on June 24, ensure only the distribution of food through rationing and minimal sales in "HO" stores in the third quarter of this year. The MVVT of the USSR is preparing concrete proposals on this issue.

3. In order to create a stable economic situation in the Republic and to raise the standard of living of the GDR's populace to that of West Germany's populace, to examine the issue of halting the delivery of goods to the Soviet Union and Poland and of counting the export of goods to the USSR as revenue for the Soviet enterprises in the GDR from the first half of 1953 with the aim of applying these goods toward the development of the GDR's external trade and the satisfaction of the internal needs of the Republic. The MVVT is preparing proposals on the Soviet Union's renunciation of reparations.

To preserve reparations in marks on the scale necessary to assure the normal function of A/O [Soviet joint-stock company] "Wismut."

4. To examine the issue of sharply reducing the occupation expenses which are being levied on the GDR to maintain the Soviet occupation troops in Germany. Proposals have been presented to Cde. A. Ia. Vyshinskii's subcommission. At present, the MVVT is preparing additional proposals in connection with the planned renunciation of reparations.

5. To hand over all Soviet industrial, commercial, and transport enterprises remaining on GDR territory as GDR property at favorable terms, as well as the Black Sea-Baltic Bank and Insurance Society, using the payment received for these enterprises mainly to meet the future expenses incurred by the Soviet Union through the A/O Wismut. The MVVT of the USSR is preparing proposals.

6. To establish for the purposes of financial settlements between the USSR and GDR an exchange rate of the GDR mark to the ruble that relates to the true ratio of purchasing power between the mark to the ruble. Proposals have been presented to Cde. A. Ia. Vyshinskii's subcommittee.

7. To consider, as a priority task of the SED CC and the GDR government, the serious improvement of the every-day material situation at public and private enterprises of the GDR, as well as the development of broad political work among workers directed at strengthening the ties between the party and the working class. The proposal has been withdrawn by Cdes. Sokolovskii, Semyonov and Yudin, insofar as this wish has already been reflected in resolutions of the GDR government and of the SED CC.

8. In view of the fact that lately the SED CC has adopted an incorrect method in leading the state and the economy, replacing the state and economic organs to

undertake a strict separation of functions between the government of the GDR, on the one hand, and the SED CC on the other, bringing only the major principal issues of building the state and developing the economy to the SED CC for examination. To concentrate the attention of the SED CC on developing political work in the masses of the population and on placing the SED's internal party work on the basis of the broad development of internal party democracy, criticism, and self-criticism from the bottom to the top [of the party]. The proposal will be discussed in connection with the visit by the leadership of the SED CC to Moscow.

In keeping with this, to consider it necessary to:

a) carry out the reorganization of the GDR government with the aim of strengthening and simultaneously reducing the state apparatus at the center and the regions, having united a series of fragmented ministries and departments into larger ministries and departments. Proposal canceled as untimely in Cde. A.Ia. Vyshinskii's subcommission with the agreement of Cdes. Sokolovskii, Semyonov and Yudin.

b) liquidate the GDR Ministry of State Security, merging it with the staff of the GDR Ministry of Internal Affairs. Proposal similarly canceled.

c) free Cde. Ulbricht of the responsibilities of Deputy Prime Minister of the GDR with the aim that he concentrate his attention on the work of the SED CC. Proposal canceled.

d) elevate the role of the People's Chamber as an actively functioning republican parliament which discusses and adopts laws for the republic, approves commissions [and] discusses questions and demands raised by deputies of the People's Chamber of the GDR. Proposal will be implemented through operational procedure and a resolution on this is not required.

Prohibit the adoption of any decrees having the character of laws, except by the People's Chamber of the GDR.

e) convene an extraordinary session of the GDR People's Chamber for an evaluation of the GDR government's work and of the mistakes it has committed, to be followed by changes in the government's personnel, the dismissal of incompetent and unpopular ministers and the promotion of people who are more popular in the country into ministerial posts by drawing more heavily on the representatives of other parties. Proposal canceled.

9. To limit the functions of the Secretariat of the SED CC to: issues of monitoring the implementation of the CC's Politburo decisions, organizational issues, the selection, placement, and training of cadres, and also issues of party-political work amongst the masses. Will be discussed in connection with the visit by the leadership of the SED CC to Moscow.

To carry out a change in the personnel of the Secretariat of the SED CC with the aim of moving a series of new employees, including intelligentsia members, into the Secretariat. To reduce the number of members of the Secretariat from 11 persons to five. To eliminate the presently existing post of General Secretary of the SED CC, introducing the posts of secretaries of the CC.

10. To consider it crucial to hold, in the course of the coming 3-4 months, the upcoming Fourth Congress of the SED, at which the issues of the party's tasks in connection with the implementation of the New Course would be discussed. To carry out a serious renewal of the CC personnel at the Congress, in order to replenish it with young cadres who have proved themselves in practical work with the masses, the working class, the working peasantry, and also the intelligentsia. To renew in a fundamental manner the personnel of the Politburo of the SED CC, removing from it those who do not stand at the level necessary for the leadership of the party and the

state in the current circumstances. Issue will be discussed in connection with the visit by the leadership of the SED CC to Moscow.

11. To conduct [both] a special investigation into the work of trade unions and [to carry out] a decisive change in the personnel of the unions' leadership organs, as well as adopting new charter which would fundamentally change the character of the work of trade unions in conformity with the tasks of the new course. Proposal will be implemented through operational procedure and no resolution is required for this.

12. To re-examine the numbers, organization, and distribution of the People's Police of the GDR, equipping them with modern arms, including armored transport vehicles, armored cars and communications equipment, as well as creating from the current divisions of barracked police, sufficiently strong, mobile, [operationally] ready divisions of the People's Police, which are capable of preserving order and calm in the republic without the help of Soviet troops. The leadership of the GDR are to present their proposals, which are now being prepared, on the issue of the police.

To consider it necessary to transform the presently existing army corps of the GDR into a troop formation for internal service in the GDR by analogy with the corresponding formation present in West Germany.

13. To give the organization of the FDJ the character of a broad-based, non-party youth organization with the use of the relevant experience of the previously existing youth organizations in Germany. To carry out a change in the leadership of the Central Council of the Free German Youth (FDJ). The proposal will be implemented through operational procedure and no resolution is required.

14. To consider it expedient to change the character and the tasks of the delegations sent to the Soviet Union from the GDR. To strengthen cultural and technical ties between the GDR and the Soviet Union. In the subcommission of Cde. A.Ia. Vyshinskii the proposal has been canceled with the agreement of Cdes. Sokolovskii, Semyonov and Yudin. The issue

To consider it expedient to curtail holiday and medical [na lechenie] travel by functionaries of the SED to the Soviet Union and other countries, and to increase holiday and medical travel to the USSR by representatives of the German intelligentsia, workers, and activists of other parties, as well as tourists. should be resolved in the course of operational procedure.

15. In order to raise the international prestige of the GDR, as well as the authority of the government of the GDR in the eyes of the local populace, to consider an official visit by the governmental delegation of the GDR to Moscow to be necessary after the confirmation of the new government by the People's Chamber. Proposal has also been withdrawn as untimely.

16. To consider the opening of the sector border of East Berlin with West Berlin after the end of the military situation in East Berlin to be inexpedient, as long as the commandants of West Berlin do not take all necessary measures to guarantee an end to the dispatch of agents and provocateurs from West Berlin to East Berlin and the GDR with the aim of carrying out subversive activities against the GDR. Proposal withdrawn insofar as a resolution on abolishing limitations on the sector border in Berlin has been adopted.

In connection with this, to establish in the near future a system of permanent and temporary passes for passage through the sector border between East and West Berlin. Moreover, in issuing these passes, not to create unnecessary difficulties and broadly to take account of the interests of the German populace.

17. To order the Command of the Group of Soviet occupational forces in Germany to improve the distribution of Soviet troops, taking into account the lessons of the

events of 17 June, and, in particular, to see to the stationing around Berlin of the necessary quantity of tank units. The issue has been resolved by the Ministry of Defense of the USSR in the course of operational procedure.