

July 18, 1973

**Letter from the Deputy Minister of the GDR Council
of Ministers to Comrade Hermann Axen**

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Summary:

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the GDR asks the PRC to comply with the status of West Berlin as part of the GDR.

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GDR Council of Ministers
GDR Foreign Ministry
Deputy Minister
Berlin, 18. July 1973

Member of the Politburo and
Secretary of the SED Central Committee
Comrade Hermann A x e n

Berlin

Dear Comrade Axen!

As we have learned from reports in the FRG and West Berlin press, after his accreditation the Ambassador of the PR China to the FRG has sent his business card to the Mayor of West Berlin and to the Minister Presidents of the states of the FRG. Other press reports talked about the intention of the PRC to open a representation in West Berlin under the authority of the [Chinese] embassy in Bonn.

For that reason, we deem it necessary to convey in verbal form the position of the GDR on this subject to the Counselor of the Embassy of the PR China to the GDR.

I am attaching a draft for the statement.

I am asking for your approval.

With socialist greetings
[signed]
Oskar Fischer

Appendix

[Handwritten comment]
Comrade Fischer
Comrade Florin
Please review content and text again with [Foreign Minister] Comrade [Otto] Winzer.
See [my] comments.
Axen, 19 July

Text of a Statement to be Read Out to the Counselor of the Embassy of the PR China to the GDR

Due to current events, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the German Democratic Republic deems it necessary to outline the position of the German Democratic Republic concerning the status of West Berlin and to explain some issues directly connected with it.

1. The following basic facts are to be considered when it comes to assess the status of West Berlin:

At no point, was West Berlin a part of the Federal Republic of Germany. The three allied Western powers had to take this factual situation into account from the very beginning. Repeatedly they had to confirm officially that West Berlin is not a part of the FRG, and is not governed by her.

The Quadripartite Agreement from 3 September 1971 again reconfirms as binding international law that “those [Western] sectors [of Berlin] continue to be not a part of the Federal Republic of Germany, and continue not to be governed by her”. Simultaneously it gets emphasized that those articles of the BRD's Basic Law [constitution] contradicting these facts do remain suspended.

From those facts it derives that the FRG does not have any sovereign rights with regard to West Berlin. Only in light of those basic facts, as outlined above, certain links between Berlin's Western sectors and the FRG can be maintained and developed.

2. In the past the People's Republic of China adhered to the position that West Berlin is not a part of the FRG and may not be governed by her. The German Democratic Republic has always welcomed this position as held by the PR China.

Recently, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China in the Federal Republic of Germany has forwarded his business card to the Governing Mayor of West Berlin as well as to the Minister Presidents of the states of the FRG. This way the Mayor of West Berlin was treated by the official representative of the PR China in the FRG like the Minister Presidents of the FRG states. The latter are under the authority of the federal government in Bonn which exercises its sovereign rights according to the provision of the Basic Law of the FRG.

Such an action must be viewed as an indication of change in the position of the PR China with regard to the status of West Berlin.

[handwritten comment by Axen on the margins: “Is this smart [to state explicitly]?”]

This official step represents a support of FRG efforts to integrate, in contradiction of the Quadripartite Agreement, West Berlin into the political and societal system of the BRD and to treat West Berlin like a state of the FRG.

The GDR Ministry for Foreign Affairs expresses its bewilderment over this step by the Ambassador of the PR China in the FRG who engaged in official diplomatic activities vis-a-vis West Berlin. The Ministry regrets that this way legitimate interests of the GDR become damaged and FRG efforts to undermine the Quadripartite Agreement are encouraged.

The GDR Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses its hope that the Chinese side will accept the viewpoint of the GDR and ceases to conduct activities vis-a-vis West Berlin through the Embassy of the PR China in the FRG.

3. Recently some socialist states have applied with respective authorities of the United States, Great Britain, and France to open General Consulates in West Berlin. In case the Chinese side harbors similar intentions, the GDR expects that, in realization of such plans, the PRC will also abide by the facts according to which West Berlin does not constitute a part of the FRG and is not governed by her.

This implies in particular:

[handwritten comment by Axen on the margins: "Do we have to say all that in combination? Should not the entire 3rd paragraph be conveyed through our embassy in Beijing?"]

The establishment of a [Chinese] representation in West Berlin cannot by any means be accomplished on the basis, and in the context, of relations between the PR China and the FRG;

an autonomous representation of the PR China should fall under direct authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PR China, and not under the authority embassy of the PR China in the FRG;

the application to establish such a representation should be filed with the three allied Western powers, and not via the embassies of these states in the FRG.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the GDR would welcome if, in its future policy concerning West Berlin, the PR China will comply with the status of West Berlin as defined in the Quadripartite Agreement and take into account the legitimate interests of the GDR.

I ask you to convey this standpoint of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the GDR to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PR China.