

No. 59/2 EXCHANGE OF NOTES BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND CANADA

Text of Notes exchanged between the Government of the Soviet Union and the Government of Canada concerning the possibility of negotiations taking place on problems relating to Germany, including a peace treaty and the question of Berlin. The Soviet Note is in reply to Canada's Note of February 17, 1959. It is essentially a summary of the Notes sent on March 2, 1959, to the United Kingdom, the United States, and France.

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SOVIET NOTE TO CANADA, MARCH 2, 1959.

The Soviet Government, referring to its Note of January 10, 1959, and the Note of February 17 of the Canadian Government in reply, considers it necessary to draw the following to the attention of the Canadian Government. On February 16, 1959, the Soviet Government received from the Governments of the U.S.A., U.K., and France Notes in reply to its Notes of January 19 to these Governments. These Notes do not contain a reply to the specific proposals of the Soviet Union concerning the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and the convocation for this purpose of a peace conference of states which took part in the war against Germany, and concerning the normalization of the situation in Berlin. The Governments of the U.S.A., the U.K. and France would substitute for the solution of these problems, which are of cardinal importance for the consolidation of peace in Europe and for the future of the German nation, discussions about the desirability of a study by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the four powers "of the German problem in all its aspects" and for their part do not advance any suggestions on the substance of the problem.

On March 2 the Soviet Government sent new Notes to the Governments of the U.S.A., and U.K. and France. It drew the attention of the governments of the Western powers to the fact that the very presentation of the German question in their Notes of February 16 indicates their unwillingness to take into consideration both the actual situations existing in Germany and the demands of common sense. Whereas, fourteen years ago, Germany, though divided into zones, was a country with a single social structure, today two German states exist and are developing in different directions. If the governments of the Western powers in fact strive for a solution of the German problem on a realistic basis, they cannot close their eyes to this fact; the more so since they took the initiative by setting up the West German state. Having set a course towards the dismemberment of Germany from the very beginning of the occupation, the U.S.A., the U.K. and France at the same time prepared the rearmament of the West German state they had created. They then cast aside the Potsdam Agreement which was key-noted by the idea of eradicating German militarism, an idea which the peoples of Europe had arrived at through untold sacrifices and privation. Subsequent events showed that their main concern was to draw Western Germany into their military alignment. The participation of the Federal Republic of Germany in NATO enabled them openly to set about creating the Bundeswehr and demanding its arming with nuclear missile weapons. It is a result of the policy of rearming and encouraging the militaristic forces in Western Germany that the European peoples have to live again in an atmosphere of anxiety and alarm.

For its future the other independent Germany state, the Germany Democratic Republic, has chosen for itself the road of peace and social progress. Here there is no room for the revival of militarism or for a policy of aggression and revenge. The Government of the German Democratic Republic has renounced compulsory military service and the creation of a mass army. The contrast and division between the two German states is also accentuated by the fact that they belong to counterposed military-political alignments of powers and are bound by definite commitments arising from affiliation to these alignments.

Thus Germany's post-war development brought to the fore problems quite different from those which confronted the four powers in the first years after the defeat of Hitler Germany. The Western powers suggest that the German problem be discussed in all its aspects but at the same time they themselves have destroyed the basis for such a discussion. There is no trace of a joint four-power policy towards Germany. No one for instance can hold the U.S.S.R. responsible for the fact that the Federal Republic of Germany has adopted a militaristic road of development. It is commonly known that the U.S.S.R. repeatedly warned the Western powers of the danger to the peace and to Germany's unity inherent in such a road of development of Western Germany. On the other hand, hardly anyone would credit the Western powers for the fact that peace-loving democratic forces have triumphed and gained strength in the German Democratic Republic today.

It is still possible to restore the co-operation of the four powers on the important problems connected with Germany. Such possibility is offered by the signing of a German peace treaty. Under a peace treaty the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany would assume like obligations which would preclude the possibility of a revival of German militarism and this would assure conditions for the peaceful development of both German states and relieve the European nations from the depressing danger of war. The Soviet Government's proposal for the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany has by now received the full approval of nine states who participated with their armed forces in the war against Hitler Germany. The population of these countries numbers nearly one thousand million. At the same time, this proposal has met with support and approval of broad sections of public opinion in many other countries. Are these not convincing facts in favour of signing a peace treaty with Germany in the early future?

As to the problem of Germany's reunification, the Soviet Government clearly and definitely stated in its reply that it considers impossible and impermissible interference in the affairs of the two German states and their substitution by anyone in solving the reunification problem. This problem can and must be solved by the Germans themselves. The only thing the four powers could do in that direction without infringing upon the sovereignty of the German Democratic Republic and the Federal Republic of Germany is to facilitate the removal of the present estrangement in the relations between the two German states and promote a rapprochement and understanding between them. For the purpose of easing the task of reunifying Germany, the Soviet Government has expressed readiness to exert such an influence, having among other things supported the proposal of the GDR Government for the establishment of a German Confederation.

It would be natural to expect that the Western powers, which declare their adherence to the cause of Germany's reunification, would display a constructive approach to this proposal. Yet so far, no such approach has been displayed. The Soviet Government would also like to emphasize that it is its firm conviction that the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and the normalization of the situation in Berlin in the present conditions would of themselves prove to be the best means of bringing nearer the solution of the reunification problem, in accordance with the national aspirations of the Germans and with interests of peace and security of other peoples. In the opinion of the Soviet Government, a peace treaty, provided there is a genuine striving for it on the part of the countries concerned, can be concluded with both German states, since they alone can now speak for Germany which signed the act of surrender. A peace treaty should be adopted to record this existing state of affairs. One must be living under illusions if one counts on changing the social system of either of these states by means of interference from without. Is it not clear that any attempt at using violence against the G.D.R. or the F.R.G. would lead to a clash between the two opposing military groupings of which they are members and would visit upon mankind a new war with immeasurably graver consequences than those of any of the previous wars?

The conclusion of a German peace treaty would also mean the settlement of the Berlin question. The Soviet Government has more than once drawn the attention of the governments of the Western powers to the fact that the situation in Berlin is abnormal and that it represents a grave source of international tension, particularly with respect to the relations between the nations of Europe. The Soviet Government wants this question to be settled on a basis acceptable to all the parties concerned with a view to safe-guarding the peace and security of the peoples of Europe. It is for this reason that it has proposed the conversion of Western Berlin into a demilitarized free city, whose independence and all the necessary business, cultural and other contacts with the countries of the West and East would be guaranteed, with reliable international safeguards, with the participation of the great powers and also of the U.N.

This being so, how should one interpret the threats being made in the West to use tanks and aircraft for a breakthrough to Berlin, when the G.D.R., as a sovereign state, which will have signed a peace treaty, becomes the full master of the lines of communication between West Berlin and the F.R.G. If there should really be an intention of resorting to force of arms behind these threats anyone who would venture to do so would have to shoulder the heavy responsibility before mankind of starting a new war.

It is the profound conviction of the Soviet Government that it is now more necessary than ever before to take urgent effective measures to prevent a dangerous turn of events. It therefore turns again to its proposal for a meeting of statesmen at the highest level. Talks by foreign ministers now proposed by the Governments of the U.S.A., the U.K. and France would be a long road. If the heads of governments have not yet firmly decided to base relations between states on co-operation and not to allow anything that would aggravate these relations, how can other representatives of the states concerned take decisions that would ensure a radical improvement in the relations between states? The very fact of a meeting of the heads of government in the present tense situation would unquestionably help to improve the entire international climate. There is hardly a need to speak of how truly historically important would be a decision by the heads of government taking part in the meeting, that henceforth they would exert efforts towards the settlement of all international problems

in the interests of peace on the basis of the principles of peaceful co-existence, and would not do anything to hamper the attainment of these noble goals.

It goes without saying that the heads of government could consider a wider range of questions than suggested by the governments of the Western powers for the foreign ministers' meeting. This applies particularly to questions which, while remaining unsettled, are fraught with a threat to the security of peoples and to world peace. The Soviet Government proceeds from the assumption that the heads of government will discuss Soviet proposals for the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany and for joint measures to eliminate the abnormal situation created by the foreign occupation of West Berlin. The decisions on the peace treaty agreed upon at this meeting should naturally be submitted to a peace conference, as was suggested by the U.S.S.R. Moreover, the meeting of the heads of government could also discuss questions concerning the maintenance of European security and disarmament, such as the reciprocal withdrawal of troops and the establishment of an atom-free zone, and of a zone of disengagement between the armed forces of the Warsaw treaty and NATO organizations, the reduction of the armed forces of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., the U.K. and France on the territories of other states, the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen weapons and cessation of their tests, etc.

The Soviet Government holds that for the work of preparing a peace treaty with Germany and settling the issues connected with the problems of ensuring European security to be successful, an active part in it should be taken by representatives of the countries which were attacked by Nazi Germany. In view of this, the Soviet Government deems it necessary for the meeting to be attended, in addition to the four powers, by such interested countries as Poland and Czechoslovakia, these being states which border on Germany and which were the first victims of Nazi aggression. As for the participation in the meeting of the G.D.R. and the F.R.G., the Soviet Government considers that both the G.D.R. and the F.R.G. should be represented at the summit meeting during the discussion of the questions of a peace treaty with Germany, and West Berlin.

Voices against a summit meeting are frequently heard in the West alleging that there is no guarantee that it will not fail. Naturally if some participants from the very outset have no desire to contribute to agreement at such a meeting, it really may fail. But in such a case any meeting at whatever level would be inevitably doomed to failure. To ensure the success of a meeting at the summit, it is necessary for all its participants to be guided by a sincere desire of reaching an agreement and to realize that in order to ensure a lasting peace among the peoples, it is necessary to renounce the attempts of achieving some unilateral advantages at the talks. The Soviet Government is of the opinion that a meeting at the highest level would be most likely to succeed. At the present time statesmen of great authority possessing the greatest powers and experience such as the heads of government, should use their influence to give a new trend to the development of international relations. Having reached agreement on the pressing international issues, the heads of government could then instruct their foreign ministers to work out further measures for the realization of the joint decisions they had taken.

If the governments of the Western powers are not yet prepared to take part in a meeting at the summit, the Soviet Government considers that a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the U.S.S.R., the U.S.A., the U.K., France, Poland and Czechoslovakia

could be called to discuss the questions of a peace treaty with Germany and West Berlin. The Soviet Government hereby announces its consent to the proposal of the Governments of the U.S.A., the U.K. and France that both German states, the G.D.R. and the F.R.G., should be represented at this meeting. Whereas both these concrete questions have long been ripe for solution, the Soviet Government considers it expedient to set a time limit of no more than two to three months for the work of a foreign ministers' meeting. The Soviet Government proposes that this meeting of heads of government be called in April of this year in Vienna or Geneva, if this is agreeable to other participants in the meeting, and of course if the Governments of Austria or Switzerland are ready to extend hospitality to the participants in such a meeting. If the governments of the Western powers are not ready for a meeting of heads of government, then the Soviet Government proposes that a meeting of foreign ministers should be convened at the above-stated time, at the above-stated place, and in the above-stated composition. The Soviet Government expresses the hope that its proposals set out in this Note will receive the understanding and support of the Canadian Government.

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CANADIAN NOTE TO THE USSR, APRIL 24, 1959

The Government of Canada hereby acknowledges the Note of the Soviet Government of March 2nd in which reference is made to the Canadian Government's Note of February 17 and to earlier communications devoted to questions relating to Germany, including a peace treaty with Germany and the question of Berlin.

Since these exchanges took place, Notes have been transmitted to the Soviet Union by the U.S.A., U.K. and France, under date of March 26th, confirming the willingness of these Governments to commence negotiations on May 11 in Geneva at the level of foreign ministers. The proposals put forth by these Western powers and accepted by the Soviet Government in its Notes of March 30 have the support of the Canadian Government.

The Canadian Government does not therefore consider it would be of value to comment in detail on the matters raised in the Soviet Note of March 2nd. The Canadian Government expresses the hope, however, that the Soviet Government will treat the coming negotiations as a real opportunity to achieve a lessening of international tension and to settle some of the more pressing problems on a basis that takes into account the legitimate interests of all concerned.

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