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Official Peace Policy of the GDR (June 28, 1965)

The GDR Peace Council, orchestrated by the SED, used its membership in the World Peace Council to launch fierce attacks against the “imperialist” politics of West Germany and the U.S. and to spread propaganda aimed at enhancing the status of the GDR both internationally and in relation to the Federal Republic of Germany.

To All Who Want Peace: Appeal of the Peace Council of the GDR to the Advocates of Peace in West Germany and in all Countries on the Occasion of the World Peace Congress in Helsinki

At this grave hour we are turning to you: The most sacred possession of humanity, peace, is being eclipsed by war and threats of war. The nations of the world have been seized by disquiet and concern. Will the world be pulled into the abyss of war once again or will the nations seal this abyss forever?

In South Vietnam, the United States is trying to drown the people’s will for freedom and self-determination in blood. In raging desperation, Washington is even driving its bombers over the border into the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.

In the Dominican Republic, the United States wants to kill people’s right to democracy and freedom by means of military intervention.

Together with the forward strategists in Bonn, the ruling circles in the United States want to trigger conflicts in the heart of Europe as well. This multiplies the threat to peace! Here in Europe the two power blocs stand directly opposite one another. Here the military forces are conglomerating. One spark will suffice and an explosion of unfathomable magnitude will blow entire nations into oblivion.

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Accusingly, we point to the Johnson government. In the communiqué signed by President [Lyndon B.] Johnson and [Chancellor Ludwig] Erhard, the head of the government in Bonn has sided with United States imperialism without reservation. He is supporting all military aggressions, especially the crime in Vietnam, with propaganda, huge sums of money, and by supplying materials. This is the price that Erhard had to pay for U.S. support of the grab for nuclear weapons by the Hitler-generals in Bonn. The Erhard government wants to bring the brutal U.S. rape methods [used] in Southeast Asia to central Europe. West German foreign

minister [Gerhard] Schröder demanded: We must “be prepared to use short-term changes in the state of world policy affairs to our advantage.” This is the voice of the adventure-tactics of incorrigible world conquerors. Behind Schröder’s “short-term changes” is [Kai-Uwe von] Hassel’s forward strategy, the military strike at the supposedly most favorable opportunity. Bonn’s foreign minister Schröder demands: even more Bundeswehr generals should occupy the highest command positions in NATO. He demands: a greater “share of responsibility and participation” in the power to deploy nuclear weapons.

Why? Against whom?

We accuse the Erhard government and the American government of inciting war against the German Democratic Republic.

The American President Johnson had the presumption on May 8, 1965, to demand that the GDR disappear. The entire population of West Germany is supposed to get used to the war preparations and be softened up for war through a flood of provocative facts and speeches by its leaders. An unbridled wave of chauvinism and nationalism is supposed to wash away reason. At hundreds of revanchist rallies over the last days and weeks, sovereign peoples are being denounced, their borders already extinguished, their right to self-determination dissolved once again into imperialistic rule.

How often and ever more frequently do pointed, provocative vituperations against the state borders of the GDR spring forth from West Germany and West Berlin! Bonn’s machinery is running at dangerously high speeds in order to create the internal prerequisites for external aggression. Devoid of all scruples, Bonn’s war minister Hassel summarized the essence and goal of the Emergency Acts in one sentence: “Without internal stability, the Bundeswehr’s order to fight cannot be fulfilled!” Their stability – that is military dictatorship! Their orders to fight – that is aggression! In German history, internal dictatorship always preceded external aggression. Does that affect only us Germans? It is precisely in Europe that peace cannot be divided! We warn against the assumption that the western governments could save themselves from the potential consequences of the West German war policy by supporting this very policy. History has taught a different lesson. When we listen to Erhard, Hassel, and Schröder, when their words and actions start to show signs of a military dictatorship, then it makes us think of the torch-lit parade on January 30, 1933, and how these torches lit the entire world on fire.

In profound concern for peace, for the future of our nation, and all nations, we are turning, on the eve of the World Congress for peace, national sovereignty, and universal disarmament, to all who want peace, in West Germany and in all countries, and to all their organizations and movements.

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Source: “An alle, die den Frieden wollen. Appell des Friedensrates der DDR an die Friedensanhänger in Westdeutschland und in allen Ländern“ [“To All Who Want Peace: Appeal of the Peace Council of the GDR to the Advocates of Peace in West Germany and in all Countries on the Occasion of the World Peace Congress in Helsinki”] (July 28, 1965), *Neues Deutschland*, June 29, 1965, p. 3 B.

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