

Soviet commentary on the Quadripartite Agreement (4 September 1971)

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Soviet Commentary on the Quadripartite Agreement on Berlin, September 4, 1971

The Soviet Union, the U.S.A., Great Britain and France yesterday signed a quadripartite agreement on questions concerning West Berlin. The agreement is being studied and discussed with lively interest by political circles, the public and the press of all countries.

A settlement on West Berlin is undoubtedly one of the important landmarks on the path of consolidating a lasting peace in Europe and of strengthening security on our continent. The participants in the now-completed negotiations reached agreement on one of the most complex problems in postwar international relations. For many years West Berlin played the role of a "front-line city." Over a 25-year period certain Western circles used West Berlin to exacerbate the situation and to undermine the efforts undertaken by the Soviet Union, the other socialist countries and all peace-loving forces aimed at a relaxation of tension in Europe. The reaching of an agreement on West Berlin is new, convincing confirmation that, if the sides display goodwill, complex international problems give way to solution.

Let us remind you that the initiative for convening the four-power negotiations on West Berlin which led to the agreement came from the Soviet Union. The peace-loving world public views this act as convincing testimony that our country, the German Democratic Republic and the other states of the socialist commonwealth put into practice their fundamental policy of detente and of ensuring a lasting peace.

Speaking in Berlin at the Eighth Congress of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, L. I. Brezhnev, General Secretary of the C.P.S.U. Central Committee, noted that the joint concerted efforts of the Soviet Union and the G.D.R. are directed at achieving a state of affairs such that West Berlin will cease to be a detonator of tensions and crisis situations and whereby normal conditions will be provided for the life of this city and its population — naturally, with due consideration for the legitimate interests and sovereign rights of the G.D.R.

The content of the agreement argues convincingly that an effective foundation has been laid for normalizing and improving the situation in West Berlin and related issues. In no way does the agreement affect the fundamental political and juridical positions of the sides with respect to West Berlin. The agreement is directed toward removing a source of conflict and tension in the center of the continent and toward ensuring on this basis practical improvements for the population of West Berlin.

The agreement clearly spells out the fact that West Berlin is not a part of the Federal Republic of Germany, and envisages a curtailment of the F.R.G.'s political activities in the city; as is known, these activities have led to serious complications and have created difficulties for West Berliners and for residents in the F.R.G.

The understanding outlines a series of practical measures concerning travel between the F.R.G. and West Berlin using roadways and transport facilities in the G.D.R. West Berlin's communications with the outside world, including the immediate surroundings, are improving. The agreement does not impede the maintenance of normal economic, cultural and other ties between West Berlin and the F.R.G., subject to observance of the agreement's fundamentally important proviso that this city is not part of the Federal Republic and that the F.R.G. cannot and will not govern this city in the future either.

The adopted document stems from territorial and political realities existing in present-day Europe, and also from respect for the sovereign rights and interests of the peace-loving German socialist state, the German Democratic Republic. The G.D.R. Council of Ministers stated with satisfaction that the understanding "would promote a relaxation of the situation in Central Europe." The G.D.R. government also emphasized its readiness, as in the past, to contribute constructive proposals and negotiations to the implementation of the four-power understanding, which is fully in keeping with the interests of the G.D.R.

It is noted in international comments that the agreement is the result of complex and prolonged negotiations that took about a year and a half. During the negotiations it was possible to strike a mutually acceptable balance of interests. Therefore, the musing of certain Western commentators on who won more or who won less from this agreement is simply groundless. In fact, the winners are all those who are interested in

consolidating international peace, who would like to see West Berlin as a participant in the relaxation of tension in Europe, who come out for strengthening trust and cooperation among states, and for solving important problems on a realistic basis and in the interests of universal peace.

As democratic circles of various countries correctly note, only revanchist and neo-Nazi forces — champions of the revival of the cold war — stand to lose from the West Berlin agreement. But it is not these forces who now determine the basic tendencies of development on the European continent. Realistically-minded politicians in the West, including those in the F.R.G., note that the understanding on West Berlin removes “a serious obstacle in the path of reducing tension in Europe” and puts in a difficult position the opponents of the ratification of the Soviet-West German and Polish-West German treaties and the opponents of convening an all-European conference.

The peoples of Europe, the peace-loving public of all countries, broad political circles and many press organs greet with satisfaction the settlement on West Berlin. The peoples of the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries welcome the agreement. These people see in it still another practical expression of their countries’ common foreign-policy course directed toward positive strides in the development of the European situation. Communist and Workers’ Parties characterize the agreement as a success for the forces of peace. The signed agreement on West Berlin has met approval in government and legislative circles of Western countries.

It would be in the interests of all peoples for this agreement to take effect at the earliest possible date. The signing of the agreement strengthens the hopes of all peoples for a favorable solution to other unsettled pressing problems of European and world politics and hopes for the transformation of Europe into a zone of lasting peace, into an area of equal and mutually advantageous cooperation.