

GDR Radio Broadcast on the Founding of the Warsaw Pact (May 15, 1955)

Abstract

One week after the Federal Republic of Germany joined NATO, the countries of Eastern Europe also concluded an alliance with the Soviet Union in Warsaw, the "Warsaw Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance", known in the West as the Warsaw Pact for short. Unlike NATO, in which the members saw themselves as equal partners, the command of the Warsaw Pact was under the control of the Soviet Union. It also ensured that the individual states remained communist and loyal to Moscow. When the treaty was signed, GDR radio emphasized above all that the Warsaw Pact contributed to peace in Europe and brought the two German states one step closer to reunification. On May 15, 1955, the GDR delegation returned from Warsaw, including Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl. He had signed the document on behalf of the GDR and gave a speech at the reception at Berlin Ostbahnhof. The following recording is a so-called monitor recording, i.e. the West Berlin-based broadcaster RIAS recorded and archived this GDR radio broadcast. The first part of Grotewohl's speech on the importance of the Warsaw Pact can be heard in the excerpt of the broadcast presented here.

Source

/Speaker: Dear listeners, this morning tens of thousands of Berliners gave a lively welcome to the delegation of the government of the German Democratic Republic, which took part in the Warsaw Conference of European countries to guarantee peace and security in Europe, when it arrived at the Ostbahnhof. You will hear a report on the warm welcome given to the government delegation by the people of the German capital.

/Reporter: We are expecting our government delegation back. On the platform, decorated with flowers and banners, everyone is full of anticipation, dear listeners. A music choir and an honorary company of the German People's Police have lined up to greet the delegation. The following have gathered to welcome the government delegation: the acting President of the People's Chamber of the German Democratic Republic, Hermann Matern, the acting Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic, Heinrich Rau, Dr. Hilde Benjamin, Minister of Justice, and other representatives of the government. I also recognize representatives of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, representatives of the diplomatic corps, representatives of the parties and mass organizations. And now, my dear listeners, the time has come: the special train Warsaw-Berlin is entering the station concourse. [...]

The delegation has taken its seat in the VIP platform and is warmly welcomed by many thousands of Berliners. Otto Grotewohl holds a wonderful bouquet of tulips in his arms and waves warmly to the many, many Berliners who have come here to the Ostbahnhof with flags and banners.

/[Shouts from the crowd]: Hurray, hurray!

/Reporter: And now the Prime Minister of the German Democratic Republic, Otto Grotewohl, will address the Berliners.

/Grotewohl: Dear friends, dear comrades, the delegation of the German Democratic Republic to the Warsaw Conference thanks you very much for the welcome you have given us here in Berlin, the capital of Germany. When we left, we gave the assurance that the delegation would safeguard and represent the interests of the German Democratic Republic and the national interests of the entire German people in the negotiations about the Warsaw Treaty.

I can tell you today that the delegation has fulfilled this assurance. We spoke at the conference on behalf

of the national interests of the entire German people and declared that the delegation of the German Democratic Republic considers it its duty to make the following declaration at the signing of the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance and the creation of a United Command:

In view of the aim of the Treaty to ensure peace and security in Europe, the Government of the German Democratic Republic sees in the Treaty a great support of the German people in their striving for the peaceful and democratic reunification of Germany. The German Democratic Republic continues to regard the reunification of Germany on a peaceful and democratic basis as its and the entire German people's main task and will do everything in its power to accelerate the reunification of Germany.

In signing the present Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, the Government of the German Democratic Republic assumes that the reunified Germany will be free of the obligations entered into by one part of Germany in military-political treaties and agreements concluded prior to reunification.

While Adenauer sold the sovereignty of West Germany to the imperialist Western powers for 50 years after the conclusion of the Paris Treaties and placed the decision on the reunification of Germany in the hands of foreign interveners, the Warsaw Treaty, including our declaration, represents a further step on the road to the peaceful reunification of Germany. It strengthens and encourages the patriotic forces in West Germany to successfully continue their struggle for a peaceful and democratic solution to the German question. In contrast to the Paris Treaties, which make the path to peaceful and democratic reunification more difficult for West Germany, the Warsaw Treaty gives the German Democratic Republic full freedom to negotiate the peaceful reunification of Germany without hindrance and to take all other necessary measures.

/[Applause]

[. . .]

Source: SWR2 Archivradio

<https://www.ardaudiothek.de/episode/archivradio-geschichte-im-original/gruendung-des-warschauer-pakts/swr2/10349563/>

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