

“Stop the Warmongers! Stop the Perpetrators of Genocide!” (November 1st, 1956)

Abstract

Egypt occupied a special place in East Germany’s international relations strategy, as demonstrated in this appeal; the presidium announces their “sympathy and solidarity” with the Egyptian people and decries the stance of the Bonn government. Egypt was the first country in the region to sign an economic deal with the GDR, in March 1953. In 1954, the East Germans were invited to participate in a trade fair in Cairo, which allowed them to show off their industrial prowess and establish further commercial contacts in the Arab region. And in 1955, Egypt welcomed an East German delegation to Cairo, headed by East Germany’s trade minister; the trip led to another series of economic deals between the two countries. Both Germanies saw Egypt as integral to their foreign policy strategy: Nasser’s emergence as a leader in the non-aligned movement, and his growing popularity in the Arab world, meant that both countries saw Egypt as the key to unlocking the rest of the Arab world. Nasser was well aware of this and exploited the divide between the two countries, feeding the GDR breadcrumbs to keep them interested while refusing to grant them diplomatic recognition for fear of sullyng Egypt’s relationship with the FRG. Though the East Germans attempted to utilize the Suez Crisis to deepen the rift between West Germany and Egypt, diplomatic recognition of the country did not come until after the Six-Day War in 1967, which proved that the East German strategy of exploiting conflict in the Middle East for its own benefit eventually paid off.

Source

Appeal from the Presidium of the National Council Concerning Aggression against Egypt

Berlin. On Wednesday evening, the Presidium of the National Council of the National Front of Democratic Germany decided upon the following appeal to the population of the German Democratic Republic:

“Something monstrous has happened. In the evening hours of October 31, warships, aviation squadrons and troops of English and French imperialism maliciously attacked the peaceful Egyptian people. This brutal act of military aggression is an outrageous violation and an open breach of the United Nations Charter, a heavy blow to peace, and conjures up an immediate danger for all of humanity. The peoples want détente and peace, but the imperialists bring death and ruin upon them.

The National Front solemnly announced to democratic Germany: All our sympathy and solidarity are with the Egyptian people in its hour of need. The Egyptian government, which has to the end demonstrated its willingness to reach an agreement, deserves the support of all peace-loving countries and people.

The German people deeply regrets the stance of the Bonn government, which, since the beginning of the Suez conflict, has stood, in word and deed, on the side of those who are now attacking Egypt with fire and sword.

The fomenters of war cynically admit to using events in Hungary to enact their criminal military aggression. We hope that, in light of this predatory action against a freedom-loving people, the patriotic forces in Hungary will redouble their efforts to preserve the popular democratic order and help the firmly

established front of states in the peace camp to save the world from the fires of war and force the reestablishment of peace. Today, the personnel of many workplaces and institutes as well as many personalities have turned to the Presidium of the National Council of the National Front of Democratic Germany to express their anger at the malicious attack on Egypt and thereby on the peace.

In this grave situation, it is the duty of all citizens of the German Democratic Republic to support the peace policy of the government and the national front, the policy of fraternal cooperation among the socialist states and all peace-loving people across the world. Those who are carpet-bombing Egyptian cities and villages today and their allies in Bonn are conducting a campaign of slander against the German Democratic Republic that is intended to end in fratricide and war.

Youth of the German Democratic Republic! Young workers! Students! The German Democratic Republic has opened the doors for you to a new, secure life in peace, freedom and socialism. Direct your energy, your boldness, your capacity for enthusiasm to humanity's noblest and highest aim: the preservation of peace. You are the future, and the future belongs to you if you rise up with all the power and passion of youth against the forces of the past, Hitler's company bosses, generals and politicians.

Citizens of the German Democratic Republic! Think of what we have accomplished in eleven years of shared labor. Never must we allow the interests of war to assail our achievements and throw firebrands at Central Europe, even when this occurs under the mask of freedom. Their notion of freedom has been revealed once again in recent hours in Egypt. They intend to tear Germany asunder in the same manner!

The rubble and wounds of the past admonish us! The thunder of the cannon, the bursting of bombs and grenades, the screams and groans of the innocent victims of the imperialists reach all of our ears. Stop the warmongers! Stop the perpetrators of genocide!

Let us stand steadfast together, so that nothing and nobody can divert us from our chosen path of peace and freedom, of safeguarding our work of reconstruction and peaceful understanding among Germans! Our republic is the bulwark of peace both without and within. Forwards under its banners!

The Presidium of the National Council of the National Front of Democratic Germany
for and on behalf of Prof. Dr. Correns“

Source of original German text: “Halt den Kriegstreibern! Halt den Völkermördern! Aufruf des Präsidiums des Nationalrats zur Aggression gegen Ägypten,” *Neue Zeit*, vol. 12, no. 256, November 1, 1956, p. 1.

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Recommended Citation: “Stop the Warmongers! Stop the Perpetrators of Genocide!” (November 1st, 1956), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/occupation-and-the-emergence-of-two-states-1945-1961/ghdi:document-5233>> [January 23, 2025].