

November 22, 1972

**Notes about a Conversation with the USSR's
Ambassador, Comrade Malzev, on 22 November
1972**

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Summary:

Memorandum of Conversation between East German officials and the Soviet ambassador to Finland on the subject of the seating arrangements and participant designations for the upcoming CSCE conference

Original Language:

German

Contents:

Translation - English

Helsinki, 22 November 1972[1]

Notes about a conversation with the USSR's ambassador Comrade Malzev[2] on 22 November 1972

The conversation took place due to our suggestion. Aside from Comrade Malzev the participants were:

Comrade Oelzner[3]

Comrade Dr. Bock[4]

Comrade Trinks[5]

Comrade Oelzner elaborated on recent developments concerning the question of seating arrangements. He reported about his conversation with Ambassador Pekuri.[6]

Comrade Malzev explained that yesterday in a conversation with Foreign Minister Karjalainen[7] the latter had said that there would be difficulties about the designation of the states and that changes were proposed. The FRG would insist on "Germany" being the key word for its own designation.

Both Karjalainen and the head of the Finnish delegation, Tuovinen,[8] with whom Malzev subsequently conversed, explained that the Finns had turned to various embassies in order to sound out respective views concerning the changing of the designation of states. Replying to this inquiry the Soviet embassy stated that the Soviet Union was categorically opposed to any change in the existing list of state designations and that she would challenge a state not being listed according to the alphabetical order. The Finns in their inquiry to the Soviet embassy did not mention the question of using the French alphabet instead of the English.[9]

In the conversation between Comrade Malzev with Mr. Tuovinen, the latter had pointed to the probability of a confrontation of positions at the very beginning of the consultations, in full view of the general public, if the use of the French alphabet was to be rejected. Tuovinen had reported on Comrade Oelzner's conversation with Pekuri and he had referred to Comrade Oelzner's attitude of rejection.

Concerning further steps, Comrade Malzev explained that the Soviet embassy would once more express its rejection of any changes in the existing seating arrangements [to the Finns] in the future. According to the state of play, however, one had to assume that in the existing order, the English alphabet would form the basis for the seating arrangement. But we [the GDR] should avoid endangering the start of the multilateral consultations by insisting on our position. According to Comrade Malzev it was not a good idea to refer to the UN proceedings in order to legitimatise our demands as in the UN obviously every state could determine its own designation. Facing the current situation, we should try to persuade the Finns that this regulation is solely relevant for the seating arrangement and is not applied, for example, to the list of participants. [...]

Endnotes

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Ministry and the CSCE negotiations - Plans, preparations, tactics and presumptions," CWIHP e-Dossier Nr. 17, on behalf of the Project 'CSCE and the Transformation of Europe', University of Mannheim 2008 ()".

[2] Victor F. Malzev was the Soviet Union's regular ambassador to Finland at the time of the CSCE preparations and negotiations.

[3] Heinz Oelzner (1921-1991) served as the GDR's ambassador to Finland from 1972 to 1976.

[4] Dr. Siegfried Bock (*1926) was head of the GDR's Delegation to the CSCE talks from the start of the Multilateral Preparatory Talks on 22 November 1972 to the close of Stage II on 21 July 1975. At the same time, he headed the Department for Principal Questions and Planning in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MfAA). After ten years (1967-1977) as head of department in the MfAA, he was sent to Romania, where he served as the GDR's ambassador from 1977 to 1984. His last post as ambassador led him to Belgrade (1988-1990). Bock's dismissal as head of department in 1977 resulted from his protest against the (West) German translation of the peaceful change clause in 1975. Whereas Bock opposed the West German translation of the peaceful change text, and called upon Alexander Bondarenko, the head of the German department in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for help, Andrei Gromyko approved the West German text in order to pave the way for a successful conclusion of the CSCE. Bock's posts as ambassador to Romania and Yugoslavia - two states critical of the GDR's unquestioning loyalty to Moscow - reflected the disciplinary reasons behind his transfer. See Siegfried Bock: Die DDR im KSZE-Prozess, in: Siegfried Bock, Ingrid Muth, Hermann Schwiesau (eds): DDR-Aussenpolitik im Rueckspiegel - Diplomaten im Gesprach, Muenster 2004.

[5] Hannelore Trinks (*1929) was deputy head of the language department of the MfAA. She served as Russian language interpreter for the GDR's delegation to the CSCE talks.

[6] Joel Pekuri, a Finnish diplomat, was the executive secretary of the CSCE.

[7] Ahti Karjalainen (1923-1990) was Foreign Minister of Finland in 1961, from 1964 to 1970, and from 1972 to 1975.

[8] Matti Tuovinen was Director of the Political Department in the Finnish Foreign Ministry.

[9] The following designations in English and French illustrate the argument over the seating order. According to the English alphabet, the designations of the FRG, the GDR, and the USA are: Federal Republic of Germany, German Democratic Republic, United States of America. The FRG insisted on the French alphabet and on "Germany" being the key word for its own designation. The intention lay in having the GDR seated between Bonn and Washington: République fédérale d'Allemagne (RFA), République démocratique allemande (RDA), États-Unis d'Amérique.