

**June 1, 1984**  
**Memorandum of Conversation between Erich  
Honecker and Kim Il Sung**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Summary of the conversation between Erich Honecker and Kim Il Sung on 1 June 1984. Conversation concerning economic cooperation between North Korea and East Germany, and the expansion of relations to include African countries.

**Original Language:**

German

**Contents:**

Translation - English

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Memorandum  
on the meeting between Erich Honecker and Kim Il Sung on  
1 June 1984

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E. Honecker began by expressing his gratitude for the lively exchange of views that took place during Kim Il Sung's visit. You were able to become more familiar with the policies of our Party and government, E. Honecker said, during your stay in Berlin, Wolkow, Frankfurt (Oder) and Eisenhüttenstadt, and during discussions with members of your delegation in the semi-conductor plant and in the Buna plant. And it was evident that the masses support these policies.

E. Honecker stated: I am happy about how well our views on the most important issues coincide. I was already convinced of this in 1977, at the time we agreed to enter into the Treaty on Friendship and Cooperation. Today we will sign this treaty. At the same time, both heads of state will sign the Agreement on Economic and Scientific Cooperation between our two nations. Naturally, all of this is extremely important as an inspiration for our people, as you noted.

As you know, the development of the GDR is occurring based on a major division of labor in the framework of COMECON, cooperation with the other socialist countries. Seventy percent of our foreign trade goes to the socialist world, thirty percent to the non-socialist world. The great majority of our trade is based on the dynamic development of our industry. We have obligations that we must honor, both with respect to socialist countries, in particular based on cooperation and specialization, and in trade with the capitalist world, as well. It must be stated that trade with the capitalist world has suffered for the last 4 years, given the freeze on credit that the Reagan administration implemented with its allies. The same applies to deliveries of what they call "strategic goods." Regardless of the complex conditions that arose for our balance of payments, we rely on ourselves, on the Soviet Union, and on the socialist community. You could say that our confidence in our own abilities is justified.

In the past few years the GDR has developed into a powerful industrial complex, into an industrialized nation, as they say in the West. It is now among the ten strongest industrialized nations in the world. We have made great progress in the fields of microelectronics, in refining our own raw materials. Organizing our industries into collective combines that respect the complete independence of the operations has proved worthwhile. The collective combines can react to demand with flexibility and endeavor to maintain and influence peak positions in critical fields.

We devote great attention to upgrading coal. Brown coal is the basis for gas production in the GDR. It is significant that coal dust is used in operations that used heating oil in the past, such as the cement industry. We are now in the process of converting from "D" locomotives to "E" locomotives.

In terms of bilateral relations between the GDR and the DPRK, E. Honecker stated that they are developing well. It is satisfying to see that economic and scientific/technical cooperation has made steady and dynamic progress since 1977. This positive development is manifested above all in the fact that sales of goods continue to increase. Based on the longterm trade agreement, sales will grow approximately 160 percent in 1984.

I would like to highlight the cooperation in the building of the automation equipment

plant in Pyongyang, which began operating in 1983, and in the new construction of an anilon textile plant and the reconstruction of an existing textile plant, E. Honecker said. The GDR provided the equipment in the framework of government credits. Measures for scientific/technical cooperation are being realized between the two nations, in particular in the fields of chemistry, mining, and metallurgy. We believe that it would be useful to both countries if in the future we were to link scientific/technical cooperation even more strongly to focal points of economic cooperation.

We now think the time has come to prepare and reach agreement on measures for developing mutually advantageous economic and scientific/technical cooperation for the post-1985 years and thus to create a stable foundation for our cooperation for the period up to 1990. Talks between economic delegations from both countries in March of this year already provided a number of good incentives. Initial measures were established at the last meeting of the advisory committee.

It would be useful to enter into an agreement on economic and scientific/technical cooperation between the GDR and DPRK for the period up to 1990. We are assuming that the long-term agreement from 1977 was worthwhile and our further cooperation can be formulated even more goal-intensively if we proceed in accordance with a plan we both agree on. For this reason, over the past few days we prepared and made available for discussion the draft of an agreement for the period up to 1990.

The economic efficiency of our cooperation should be further increased by our concentrating even more on fundamental work for consolidating the economic potential of both countries. We believe conditions are good for strengthening cooperation in the fields of mining, processing, and the supplying of raw materials, basic materials, and energy carriers. We are prepared to support the expansion and modernization of capacities in the DPRK's extractive industry by providing machines and equipment and want to increase the products we receive from these capacities. We completely understand that your country does not want to provide only raw materials at the first processing stage, but to a certain extent would like to provide refined exports. We would also consider such a possibility.

Also in the field of processing industries, especially mechanical engineering and electrotechnology/electronics, we consider the conditions for further cooperation to be very good. We welcome the fact that the responsible minister has established contacts with us and leading comrades from collective combines and operations in both countries are working out proposals about what, to our mutual advantage, is to happen with our cooperation in the next few years. We are also willing and in a position to provide certain equipment for the textile industry, for production of agar and also other items if, in exchange, we can take goods that the GDR's national economy requires.

We would like to propose that the central planning organs of our countries hold detailed consultations on realizing the central tasks for economic cooperation based on the foundation of the agreement signed [for the period] to 1990. They should come to agreement on the specific basis of cooperation as a condition for preparing a long-term trade agreement.

Our comrades in foreign trade have agreed to extend by one year the long-term trade agreement that is in effect until 1984, and to prepare a new long-term trade agreement for the period up to 1990. We would sincerely welcome this because it fits the rhythm of our planning.

I would particularly like to stress our intent, through even closer cooperation between our countries, to contribute to eliminating imports from Capitalist countries and to including concrete agreements in the long-term trade agreement. We consider this to

be exceptionally important, given the economic war that the US and other imperialist countries are waging with all resources against the nations of the socialist community.

Our Party and our state in the future will also continue to develop our mutually beneficial economic cooperation, with high-reliability, as an effective growth factor. Kim Il Sung expressed his thanks for the overview that E. Honecker gave on developments in the GDR since 1977, and addressed two issues: the results of the visit to a few additional operations in the GDR and the relationship to the non-aligned countries.

It is very encouraging that we were able to agree on the delivery of a semi-conductor plant by your side, he said. Soon we will send specialists to agree on all of the specific issues, including joint ordering of certain parts in third countries. We already purchased a semi-conductor plant from Japan through unofficial channels. But it is incomplete. We were not aware of electronics development in the GDR. It was only as I was preparing for this visit that I learned that you have such a plant of your own. Our Central Committee approved the means for purchasing a semi-conductor plant a long time ago. But it could not come to pass because, for one thing, we did not know about your electronics. When I was just in the embassy, I criticized our comrades because they did not provide us correct information about GDR industry. For instance, we also did not know that you produce good synthetic rubber and herbicides. In the past we purchased all of these things from capitalist countries. That has to change.

In our country we have rich deposits of heavy metals: lead, zinc, etc. We have enough sintered magnesite for you to rely on us in this regard for a long time. There are good prospects for the supply of other heavy metals over the longterm, as well. I criticized our comrades in the embassy because of the lack of information. But I must say that in terms of management we did not provide our cadre sufficient guidance on the issue of fully exploring options for cooperating with the GDR and other socialist countries.

The agreement on long-term economic cooperation that our specialists have come up with and that we will sign today-I would like you to understand that we can add to it in many areas. We are not adequately familiar with the options for cooperation. Many options should be examined in greater detail by specialists in order for us to be able to expand the agreement.

We had been members of the movement of non-aligned nations since 1975; most recently we no longer belong to the movement, said Kim Il Sung. The movement set forth good solutions but is not in a position to resolve the basic issues. Above all it is not in a position to realize the requirement for a new economic order. The states that belong to it are politically independent, but they do not have independent national economies. This is why the danger of expanding neo-colonialism is growing. The US and Japan are again reaching toward the countries of the third world. The problems of the developing countries cannot be solved simply by cooperation among themselves. Naturally something has to be done. Certainly mutual cooperation can achieve a few successes for agriculture and health care. But the countries cannot be industrialized by cooperation within the nonaligned pact. The best solution for them would be close ties between the socialist market and the market of the developing lands. We must all think carefully about this. We also oppose the efforts of capitalism in the Third World.

I believe there are two options for economic cooperation: 1. Expand the socialist market by adding individual developing nations. 2. Individual socialist nations can establish bilateral economic relations to individual developing nations. We can offer them specialists and technical documentation at lower prices than the capitalist

countries will. In return the socialist nations can obtain cheaper raw materials from them. If we help them to assure their political independence through economic independence, they will succeed in ridding themselves of the pressure of the former colonial powers.

Above all it is important to develop this cooperation with the African nations. Nearly all of the heads of state of Africa-with the exception of Kenya and Morocco-have already visited our country. We know that you, Comrade Honecker, have visited a number of African nations and ascribe great importance to Africa's development. We have agricultural specialists in nearly all African countries. Our experience in Sudan indicates that just sending a small number of specialists can help them to double or triple agricultural production and thus to solve their main problem, the issue of food. If all of the socialist countries together initiate more dynamic activities with respect to the nations of Africa, we will be able to tear all of Africa away from imperialism and set many countries on the path to socialism.

The political forces and resulting avant- garde parties in these countries are very different. Ethiopia has obviously achieved the highest level of consolidation of a Marxist party. Despite these differences, however, we can use economic cooperation to strengthen the anti-imperialist forces in all of these countries. I am very pleased that we are of the same mind on this issue, as well.

Kim Il Sung asked Erich Honecker for his impression of non-aligned nations, in particular those with a socialist orientation, based on his visits to the non-socialist world. He stressed that the DPRK maintains relations with them all in order to support the path to further decolonialization and to prevent re-colonialization. E. Honecker specifically mentioned the critical situation in Latin America, US interference in the domestic affairs of Nicaragua, El Salvador, and other countries, the continuing threats against socialist Cuba, and the situation in Angola, Mozambique, and Ethiopia.

In conclusion, it was determined that it is necessary to continue to provide vigorous support to these countries in the struggle against imperialism, in particular US imperialism, but also imperialism of the FRG.