

**WITH CONFIDENCE,  
OPTIMISM  
AND FRESH ENERGY  
WE ENTER THE YEAR  
OF THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE GERMAN  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

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National and International Policy of the GDR

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and Fresh Energy  
We Enter the Year of the 20th Anniversary  
of the German Democratic Republic



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## CONTENTS

1. New Year's Message delivered by Walter Ulbricht, Chairman  
of the State Council of the German Democratic Republic 7
2. Walter Ulbricht's New Year Address to members  
of the Diplomatic Corps on January 3, 1969 17



Dear Fellow Citizens,  
Dear Comrades and Friends,

On this last evening of the year I greet all of you most cordially. I can state with satisfaction that 1968, too, was a year of peace for us. We have used it to the best of our abilities to strengthen our German Democratic Republic, further to develop our community and socialist democracy and further to promote the happiness and welfare of our people and all citizens. We have worked hard together. But the advances made justify the efforts. We have all learned in joint work and had new experiences. And we have drawn closer together as a people, as a socialist community. Our community has developed more rapidly everywhere in 1968, in the enterprises, in the residential districts and in the sports associations.

A great event was the free democratic plebiscite in which our people gave themselves a Socialist Constitution after thorough discussion. It will shape and accompany the development of our socialist state of German nation for decades.

We have made good progress in 1968. I thank all of you very warmly in the name of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the Council of State and the Council of Ministers. You have a share in our joint advance through responsible work or good advice, through performances in the national economy, through diligent learning, discipline and a readiness to struggle, through performances in the fields of science and the arts, in sports or in other spheres of life.

The expansion of the alliance with the Soviet Union and the other states of the Warsaw Treaty considerably contributed to the further strengthening of the German Democratic Republic in this year. Here and in other socialist countries the political and moral consciousness of

people has grown. The knowledge that the safeguarding of peace in Europe is possible only through the creation of a system of European security has become firmer, a system resting on the universal knowledge of and respect for the status quo which has arisen in consequence of the Second World War. That signifies primarily the recognition of and respect for all existing frontiers and the recognition of the GDR. At the Bucharest conference of states of the Warsaw Treaty and the Consultation of the Communist and Workers' Parties of Europe in Karlovy Vary in April 1967 the necessary foundation for a system of European security was outlined.

Dear Fellow Citizens,

Whereas our German Democratic Republic continues its consistent policy of peace, the West German Federal Republic now as before is conducting an aggressive foreign policy, now camouflaged as a "new eastern policy". This policy has suffered a perceptible defeat in the year which is now drawing to its close.

In connection with the November crisis of the imperialist currency system we experienced among the ruling circles in Bonn a noteworthy outbreak of revived imperialist megalomania. The traditional inability of the German imperialists realistically to assess the relation of forces was again shown. I only hope that the rulers of the West German Federal Republic correctly evaluate the statement of the spokesman of the government of the Soviet Union before the General Assembly of the United Nations. I mean that statement of Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko that the socialist states cannot and will not permit any situation to arise in which the vital interests of socialism are encroached upon and inroads are made on the inviolability of the frontiers of the socialist community and therewith on the foundations of world peace. That refers not least

to the frontiers of the German Democratic Republic. The road to European security is unambiguously marked out.

On the occasion of the new year beginning in a few hours, the 20th year of existence of the first German peace state, I address all peoples, governments and statesmen of Europe:

Please never forget that two world wars started from German soil and that the roots of this catastrophic policy have been preserved in West Germany.

At present—24 years after the end of the Second World War—the bankers, armament industrialists, the general staff and neo-nazis are continuing this road. If the people of Europe want to live in peace, they can do so only if they unite their efforts to safeguard peace against West German revanchism and neo-nazism.

Those who want to change frontiers—and the CDU, the ruling party in West Germany wants to change them—are playing with war.

A government which does not maintain normal diplomatic relations with the GDR encourages the revenge-seeking politicians in West Germany.

Those who want relaxation of tension and understanding work for the immediate signing of the nuclear weapon non-proliferation treaty by the West German Federal Republic.

Those who want to preserve peace work for the prohibition of research in the fields of ABC weapons in West Germany and for the conclusion of an agreement between the states on the prohibition of the storage of nuclear warheads on German soil.

Those who want to serve the relaxation of tension support the admission of the German Democratic Republic to the United Nations and its specialized organizations.

We follow the events in Vietnam with strong emotion.

Many thousands of kilometres from here the valiant Vietnamese people have forced the US imperialists through their heroic struggle to admit that they cannot win their war of aggression in Vietnam. We hail this great success of the Vietnamese people, who can be certain of our continued solidarity and readiness to give fraternal aid. I think all fellow citizens feel satisfaction that, thanks to the strength and determination of the states of the Warsaw Treaty, peace could be preserved in Europe in 1968.

But at the same time we are deeply disturbed and indignant at the continued imperialist policy of aggression of the USA in Vietnam and of the Israeli government, supported by the USA, in the Middle East. We demand—together with the majority of all peoples and states—that this imperialist policy of aggression in which uncounted human lives are sacrificed every day be ended.

The progress, dear fellow citizens, which the German Democratic Republic was able to make in its internal development in 1968 is to be rated highly.

On the basis of the prognosis of the further development of our society adopted by the Seventh Party Congress we have taken important steps in the direction of the comprehensive application of the economic system of socialism and the establishment of a highly effective structure of our national economy as the basis of a high rate of growth of the national income. The rate of growth of the national income was at least five per cent in 1968, that is, about five thousand million marks. Labour productivity in industry increased by eight per cent. This remarkable growth was achieved through further steps towards automation and rationalization in the enterprises, the concentration of research and development work, the increased tempo of development in the production of technical equipment for the construction of scientific instruments

and industrial controlling engineering. We are now in the process of methodically implementing a long-term structural policy from the prognosis set up by the Seventh Party Congress.

We have also made progress in excluding from production those commodities which do not correspond to the world level and the structural development of the GDR. Visible progress has been made in the use of modern technological methods, in the speed of building construction and in the architectural arrangement of the city centres.

The new construction of the destroyed centres of our large cities, especially that of our capital with the television tower as landmark, every day draws millions of GDR citizens in its spell, conveys to them a consciousness of strength and optimism.

The application of the economic system of socialism is standing the test to an increasing degree. But it is not before the end of 1970 that we shall have completely worked out the economic system of socialism and united the already tested parts of the system into a whole.

We have made and are making every effort to base all our thinking on the creative force of the people who are to carry out the great tasks and who will then benefit from their fulfilment. Proceeding from this idea measures were taken to ensure the further training of the working people, the further implementation of the reform of higher education and the academies and the structuring and raising of the effectiveness of research. The great performances of our young people that became evident at the Young Innovators' Fairs prove that we are on the right road and that more responsibility can be placed in young people. The year 1968 also showed that the equality of rights of women is not just a well-intentioned slogan. However, I want to emphasize that it is necessary to give more help to women and girls in mastering modern

science and technology and to employ the already trained women in leading positions on a basis of equality.

The outline of the further development of our society gave a fresh impetus to the unfolding of socialist literature and art, especially in the fields of broadcasting and television. Socialist national culture is developing. Our sportsmen were able to win great successes in Olympic contests.

The further working out and implementation of the economic system of socialism enabled us in 1968 to solve important problems in the establishment of a highly effective structure of our national economy or to undertake their solution. For example, there are such questions decisive for further social progress and for scientific and technical development as the production of electronic data processing installations. Of great importance are also the results obtained in 1968 in the further development of petrochemistry. Enterprises also obtained good results in the production of valuable consumer goods for the population. Also in the sphere of transport and in other fields we have had good results. I cannot mention all important projects here but I should like to state on the whole that 1968 brought considerably greater successes than can at present be registered in figures. They are long-term projects. Their fruits will ripen in part only at the beginning of the next decade.

Allow me a special word about the performances of the working people of our socialist agricultural and foodstuffs industry. They have ensured a further increase in production and better supplies for the people through the further intensification of agricultural production, the increasing transition to industrial-type organization and management and through the development of cooperation. Despite occasional very unfavourable weather conditions the biggest grain harvest up to now was brought in. Animal production has increased in all branches. Plan

goals were exceeded in important fields. It is characteristic that workers, cooperative farmers and scientists are jointly mastering complicated problems so as to organize, plan and manage the foodstuffs industry rationally in complex form—from agricultural raw materials production to the trading establishments. Men and women farmers—only a few years ago still chained to backward working and living conditions because of small private ownership of the means of production—are now learning in contractual agricultural cooperation how to master the latest technological methods, entire economic processes, and to take part in directing them. I think we can congratulate the working people of our socialist agricultural and foodstuffs industry on their important successes and wish them further advances on this good road.

We see a great success in the fact that on the basis of our agreements with the government of the USSR of December 1967 precise cooperation agreements on scientific and technological research in the production of structure-determining commodities were made in the year which is just coming to an end. This cooperation shows the way to the economic interlacing of the socialist countries which should also be taken in future for universal benefit.

All in all, our socialist social system is standing the test and developing well.

Dear Friends and Comrades,

We are now setting course on the year 1969 and at the same time on the 20th anniversary of the German Democratic Republic. The socialist emulation in honour of this day has already begun in 1968. The slogan of the Berlin cable workers—for you, for me and for our socialist state—impressively shows the growing of our people into a community of self-reliant, educated and highly qualified persons. As socialist owners they

are consciously organizing their own lives with agreement between their social and personal interests. And all progressive forces of our people are cooperating in the National Front for the well-being of our republic.

The 20th year of existence of the socialist state of German nation is also of great interest for workers, farmers, members of the intelligentsia and tradesmen in the West German state. We feel that the time has come for young West German workers to become acquainted with the development of socialist society in the GDR. It is time for social democratic, trade union and Christian organizations of West Germany to study the peace policy of the GDR, the full right of co-determination of the workers and their trade unions in planning and management, the rights of women and our socialist democracy. Regardless of the prohibition proclaimed by the West German social-democratic leadership and the trade union leadership the relations between organizations here and there should be arranged so as to correspond to the interests of the struggle for peace, the rights of labour and social security. West German working people should always bear in mind that the West German big capitalists of the Adenauer party and the USA split Germany so as to prevent the union of the workers.

In mid-December the People's Chamber set high goals for 1969 with the adoption of the national economic plan. Reaching them will require all our strength. Such tasks as, for example, an increase in labour productivity in industry by nine per cent and the raising of production and the performances of the agricultural and foodstuffs industry by five per cent, can only be fulfilled with the creative initiative of our entire working people. This also includes the necessity for as many workers as possible to undergo a thorough scientific and technological training so that their professional knowledge will correspond to the requirements of our time.

The main question for the next year is the implementation of an

efficient modern organization of science and socialist leadership in the state and economy. Only in such a way can the rapid transfer of the highest scientific performances into production be guaranteed and in addition the far-reaching utilization of automation and electronic data processing for state leadership activity in science, industry, agriculture, trade, transport, the educational system, health service, etc., as well as for the leadership activity of central and territorial state organs. In this way we also create the prerequisites for the careful and correct preparation in 1969 and 1970 for the start of the next long-range plan. For this long-range plan covering the period 1971 to 1975 will be of the greatest importance for the further history and development of the GDR and her people.

May everyone give his best, each in his place. Then we shall also jointly harvest the fruits of our efforts. And we shall be in a position to undertake large investments in 1969 and 1970, too, and bring about significant performances.

Naturally, the full effects of the long-term investments and other measures will be noticeable only in a few years. But, as you can see from the 1969 national economic plan we shall again make steady advances in the standard of living—as was also the case in 1968. The income of our people will increase by 4.5 per cent in 1969, and the commodity turnover will increase by 4.7 per cent. The 1969 plans of the county councils also provide for increases in performances, especially in housing construction, local building and in the production of consumer goods.

For improved housing conditions the 1969 plan envisages expenditures 11 per cent higher than last year. The new construction of student hostels, sports installations—as, for example, 40 indoor swimming pools and 125 gymnastic and sports halls and others will also contribute to

raising the standard of living, the welfare and the joy of life of our working people and our children.

In this connection I have a personal concern. There are still many working people here who for one reason or another have but a low income. In 1968 we were able to raise the fixed minimum pension and introduce other measures for the improvement of the social situation of working people with low incomes. In this, however, we must all be clear about how important it is for the entire society, our entire socialist community to grant constant aid and support to elderly citizens and other needy persons. We would gladly help all those requiring it in a much shorter period of time and much more enduringly. But, in fact, we can only move step by step and must always first produce what we spend. I believe that it is also a concrete expression of our socialist community of man when we devote ourselves with special affection and attention in the enterprises and residential districts to giving socialist aid to all those who need help.

Dear Friends,

The new year begins in a few hours. We enter the year 1969 with confidence, with optimism and with fresh energy. I wish all of you a prosperous and successful New Year! I wish you happiness in your personal life and health and success in your work for our great common concern: Friendship!

Dear Mr. Ambassador!  
Gentlemen!  
Dear comrades and friends!

On behalf of the Council of State, the Government and all citizens of the German Democratic Republic I thank you for the good wishes you expressed for the New Year and your acknowledgement of the results achieved by the working people of the GDR in building the social system of socialism in all fields.

In the year now beginning we shall celebrate the 20th anniversary of the German Democratic Republic. This event will undoubtedly be also of international importance. Defying the aggressive schemes of the West German revenge-seekers, the German Democratic Republic has not only held, but consolidated her position. She has become a state marked by stability in its internal and external relations, a state with a strong economic basis.

In the history of the GDR, the year that has just come to an end will assume special importance. A new Constitution was elaborated and adopted after a country-wide popular discussion. Most of you saw with their own eyes how the population of the GDR, making freely use of its right to self-determination, gave itself this socialist Constitution.

The discussion of the Constitution and the result of the referendum confirmed the stability and legitimacy of the socialist state and social order in the GDR. At the same time it set new standards for the international reputation of the GDR. This is being increasingly understood also in those countries where the leading politicians have so far not been prepared to draw the necessary juridical conclusions from the indisputable fact that is the existence of the sovereign socialist GDR.

Carrying on unswervingly with her policy of peace, the GDR has taken

practical steps in the past year to make her contribution towards disarmament and the easing of tensions and for the development of relations between the states. In 1968 the GDR was one of the first states to sign the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. She has presented a number of concrete proposals for the safeguarding of European security. Also in the year ahead the GDR will continue this constructive foreign policy.

The main aspect of the policy of the GDR will be, also in the future, the extension of the close alliance and all-round cooperation with the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. We shall pay particular attention to further promoting the cooperation within the Warsaw Treaty and the Council for Mutual Economic Aid. The unity and coherence of the community of socialist states and its ability and readiness to ward off any attack on peace in Europe is and remains the main condition for European security.

Also in this year our sympathy and solidarity belongs to the Vietnamese people who, with active assistance from the socialist states, especially the USSR, are leading a heroic struggle against the US aggressors and their puppets. We demand that the USA and her South Vietnamese puppets give up their tactics of delaying the Paris talks and finally agree to a solution corresponding to the just demands raised by the Government of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam and guaranteeing the Vietnamese people a peaceful development, free from imperialist tutelage.

The GDR will likewise direct her attention on the full normalization and extension of relations with the Arab, African, Asian and Latin American countries, with whom we have common goals in the struggle against imperialism and neo-colonialism, for the maintenance of peace and social progress.

We shall also continue to support the efforts made by the UAR and other Arab states to remove the causes which have led to the present, peace-endangering situation in the Middle East. As a result of the Israeli Government's refusal to respect the resolution of the Security Council of the United Nations of November 22, 1967 demanding the withdrawal from the occupied territories, a dangerous trouble spot remains. We protest against any Israeli intentions to annex Arab territory in violation of UN resolutions.

The policy of the German Democratic Republic especially takes into consideration the historical experience we have had with the aggressive, expansionist policy of German imperialism. Our policy is determined by the pledge to prevent another war from starting on German soil.

The most recent events confirm the special aggressiveness of German imperialism. Its urge towards expansion is increasingly becoming evident as its internal and external contradictions are growing. The sphere controlled by German monopoly capital has greatly shrunk as a result of the Second World War. More than ever before West German imperialism feels at a disadvantage in the struggle for the territorial division of the imperialist spheres of influence. Within the limits of the quite evidently growing influence of the USA in the West German economy and policy, the West German rulers wish to play an independent political, economic and military role. This also corresponds to the ideas of leading circles in the United States. In the framework of their global strategy they want West Germany to be the point of crystallization of an imperialist West European nucleus of power spearheaded against the socialist states and the anti-imperialist movements.

Under these conditions the West German government is seeking, as a first step, to unite the West European powers under West German hegemony. The undermining of the GDR and the invasion of our country is

considered indispensable for increasing its power in the race for a "place in the sun". In this stage of expansion West Berlin has been assigned the role of the main base and most important lever.

It is not accidental that this expansionist policy, based on Strauss's concept of great-power chauvinism, was officially established and adopted in a provocative manner outside the West German territory, at the Congress of the Christian-Democratic party (CDU) in West Berlin and also at the Congress of the Christian-Social party (CSU).

During the last year the West German Government intensified its policy aimed at changing the status quo and the existing borders in Europe. It still refuses to sign the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Instead, it develops—in violation of international commitments—atomic, biological and chemical means of mass destruction. The year 1968 also saw a remarkable intensification of neo-colonialist expansion in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

The latest imperialist monetary crisis has quite clearly demonstrated to the world that the policy pursued by the West German Government is marked by the goal of dominating other countries economically and politically. Our warning that NATO and the Common Market, instead of curbing the expansionist aims of West German imperialism, would become an instrument of its policy of hegemony, has proved to be correct precisely in connection with these events. We say quite frankly: The demonstration of West Germany's economic and political ambitions with respect to France and Britain should not only worry the peoples of Western and Northern Europe, but all states interested in peace and security in Europe. This development is aggravating the situation in Europe and complicating the struggle for European security.

How can peace be safeguarded under these conditions? First and foremost by strengthening the community of socialist states and the

unity of action of all anti-imperialist and peace-loving forces, in order to leave no doubt that Bonn's expansionist policy has no chances whatsoever. We consistently adhere to the joint decisions taken at Bucharest and Karlovy Vary with a view to guaranteeing European security.

Peace and security in Europe and normal relations between the European countries demand that the West German Federal Republic renounce her policy of arrogating the right to speak for all Germans and of changing the status quo and the existing borders, and that it bar the road to the neo-nazi forces.

The only possible road is to recognize the existence of the socialist GDR and the West German Federal Republic. We make every effort to normalize our relations with West Germany on the basis of the status quo and the principles of peaceful coexistence. However, this is only possible if the Government of the West German Federal Republic relinquishes any revanchist claims. It is absurd to speak of normalization as long as the Bonn government does not give up its endeavours to maintain relations with the German Democratic Republic without recognition under international law so as to be able to seek and engineer the liquidation of the GDR. It is no less absurd to assert that no force will be used in these relations. Evidently, this policy is flying in the face of facts. It is jeopardizing peace and security.

Dear Mr. Ambassador!

Gentlemen!

Dear comrades and friends!

Great tasks are awaiting all of us in the year ahead. Our countries bear a high responsibility for preserving and safeguarding peace.

Let us jointly devote all our strength to making 1969 a year marked

by the reduction of tensions, peace and international cooperation.

It is in this spirit that I wish you and the governments and peoples you represent a happy and successful new year.

At the same time I wish that you may continue with further success in your significant and responsible work. Finally allow me to express my best wishes for your personal well-being and that of your families.





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